56 1946

Earl Conrad

Chicago Defender, Ill.

Columbia Riot First of Series

THE VIOLENCE WAVE against Negro Americans has arrived, if I may so term it, just about on time. First came the close of the war followed by labor's correct demand for the rights, conditions and wages relinquished during the war period. As the strike wave begins to settle down—a strike wave in which hundreds of thousands of Negroes participated — the big money gang has begun the process of trying to split labor. The place to begin is, of course, on the Negro front. Reaction has always found that it could make an appeal to white Americans, white workers, by poisoning their minds about Negroes. Traditionally it has been the best weapon in the arsenal of tricks used by reactionaries in and out of Government to weaken labor and all minorities.

3-16-46

3-16-46

If anybody were to try to tell me that the events in Columbia, Tenn., were not carefully discussed, prepared for and awaited by business and Governmental interests in that state I would simply have to call them a damned liar. The only thing that wasn't planned was the actual incident that set it off, but the machinery was ready waiting, all oiled to go into action against the Negro, in Columbia—just as it is prepared and all oiled in Memphis or any other Tennessee city, or in most other cities of the South.

To paraphrase Phil Harris, "That's what I don't like about the South."

A White Supremacist Speaks

I REMEMBER one night in August of 1943 when a young white man in uniform, who said he came from St. Louis, told men that, "After this war you and I know we're going to murder a couple million n——s, and when I get back I'm going to instigate it." This was the night of the Harlem riot, and I wondered later, whether this young uniformed tough had anything to do with that riot, because he was discussing riots with me. He gave me his name and his APO number and said to "print what I have to say." As I see lynchings in Alabama, Long Island and Tennessee and other places, I recall the planned determination of such supremacist elements to work up this kind of a program.

But labor in the big cities has gone to bat in defense of the Negro and it won't be possible for organized white supremacy to lynch Negroes this time without having to answer to a large bloc of organized white labor which is by now mature enough to understand the full meaning of attacks on Negroes.

Saturday

The activity in New York City at this moment and on this issue is enormous. New York may rightly be called the capital of America and so, what is being done there is significant. Negro and white organizations in a broad front which, by and large, is subordinating partisan political feeling, is pressuring the city government, the State and the Federal government, to call a halt to the attacks on Negroes.

Divide And Conquer

THE PATTERN by which world capitalism and American capitalism operates is a simple one and not even difficult to penetrate. Its fundamental principle is to keep people divided, by class, color, national thinking, and anything else that keeps people apart. It happens that all decent principles in society operate on the opposite principle: that of unifying people, that of minimizing the color, religious and social differences. The latter trend in world society is winning out and has always won out.

3-16-46

Right now the big "free enterprise" advocates are trying to cut off the historic connection between the Negro and white labor. The only way they can do this is to try to bring fascism to America and this they are trying to do by might and main.

56a 1946

Civilian (Alabama--Athens)

Negroes Fear Mob Action In Alabama

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Mon. 8/19/46

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 18.—An atmosphere of dangerous uneasiness hovered over this southern town during the first shopping week-end since the mob outbreak against Negroes a week ago. The 18-man special grand jury probe of the outbreak, ordered by circuit Judge James Crowe, Jr., to begin tomorrow, and mobilization of extra state patrolmen and local police are not considered by the 1,500 Negroes of the community a sufficient guard against another lynch attempt. Athens has a population of 3,500.

Virtually no Negroes appeared in the shopping district yesterday.

Robert N. Cannon, manager of the Ritz Theatre reported the Jimcrow gallery was empty during all performances.

KLAN GATHERS

Meanwhile Ku Klux Klan elements, gathered in knots on street corners, continue to call for further mob action against the Negro ex-serviceman who defended himself against two white veterans in front of Ritz Theatre a week ago.

It was first reported that two Negroes clashed with Roy and Ben Massey, the white veterans who were later arrested and released after a mob stormed the jail demanding they be turned out. The Masseys actually attacked one man, L. C. Horton, an employee of the Ritz Theatre.

The screen door of the jail was torn down and part of the mob surged upstairs. The Masseys were released without charge. A few minutes later, a white man mounted a bread truck, calling on the mob to search for the Negro.

The mob tore through streets beating Negro men, women and children, indiscriminately. Among those whipped by the mob were several cripples. 8/19/46

NO HOSPITAL FOR NEGROES

The injured dressed their own wounds. There is no hospital for Negroes in Limestone County.

Ten white men were finally arrested and released on bail, ranging from $300 to $600, charged with unlawful assembly.

W. C. Starkey, a white man, and real estate operator, courageously stood up against the mob. He was flogged three times by the mobsters.

One member of the mob made a public apology. He is H. S. Todd. The **Limestone Democrat**, local newspaper, carried Todd's picture and under it this statement which he asked be printed;

"I want to apologize for the part I played in the unnecessary disturbance Saturday. It is with shame that I face you people. I have learned my lesson and I aapologize to everyone."

Town Mayor, R. H. Richardson, announced he was **"alarmed"** over the incident.

The Grand Jury investigation is expected to last three days.

NEGROES THREATEND

Leading Negro citizens asserted that State Safety Director Van B. Gilbert, who is here with a detachment of state policemen, visited them advising that FBI agents had reported Louis E. Burnham, Executive Secretary of the Southern Negro Youth Congress, was on his way to Athens from Birmingham by bus. . .

According to the Negroes, Gilbert advised them to tell Burnham to to "get the hell out."

Burnham reported a highway patrol car trailed his bus from Decatur to Athens, a distance of 14 miles, and that he was shadowed by law officers wherever he went in Athens.

THE LESSONS OF ATHENS

The News Birmingham, Ala. Wed 8-14-46

If there is a lesson to be drawn from the racial disorders which occurred over the week-end in Athens, it is that such outbreaks are possible anywhere in the South. This is said advisedly, because surely if there is a community in this state which reflects, both outwardly and from its long, quiet history, the civic dignity and culture of the Old South it is this venerable college town. Everyone who has ever visited there must have been impressed with the shady, tree-lined streets, the many lovely antebellum homes of graceful Greek Revival architecture, the solidity and conservatism of her citizens and the really splendid public school system. If in the face of all these qualities, which would seem to insure Athens against outbreaks of unseemly violence, it is still possible for flare-ups to occur, then our racial tensions are deep-seated indeed and worthy of sober, earnest study. If they can happen in Athens, they can happen anywhere.

I think we should notice with approval that the local authorities dared to make arrests of certain white men charged with being active in fomenting the disturbance, and that the community leaders were quick to ask for outside help when the situation threatened to get beyond their control. After occurrences such as this I believe it would be a good idea for individual white men to assure their colored friends personally that they—again personally—regret the indignities to which members of their race have been subjected. Even though our colored neighbors may take such for granted, and surely they bear themselves with Christian patience and fortitude, it is a good idea not to let them take our sentiments for granted, but to tell them how we feel and pledge ourselves to work to prevent such outbreaks from happening again. We can do this (1) by seeking diligently to change attitudes and temper prejudice and (2) by dealing firmly with incendiary characters who incite emotional groups to these rash, violent and foolish rampages. Wed. 8-14-46

Your own paper is to be commended for its consistent and effective campaign to promote better race relations in Alabama. When will our people learn? MASON PHILLIPS.

875 Seventh Street, West.

Disgraceful Happening

The News Birmingham, Ala

Last Saturday's happenings here have brought consternation and a righteous wrath to at least 99 per cent of our population, to know that our town was shamed in the eyes of the world by the actions of a few irresponsible, and apparently drunk, men and boys. Mon. 8-19-46

What took place then is being condemned by everyone with whom we have talked. The writer was out of town and has no first-hand knowledge of the affair, but conversations and telephone calls since have shown that not one responsible citizen fails to feel that the rioting was a disgrace and has no place in the lives of those who wish to make Athens their home.

The impression was given that the whole white population was taking part in a bloody race riot. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. A very few "hotheads," some of whom had been drinking, were entirely responsible for starting the affair. They were then joined by a group of teen-agers who should have known better.

Our Negro population here is to be congratulated on their action. They proved to be better citizens than some of our white people. But for their belief and confidence in their white friends, there could have been serious trouble.

Our colored people know that all the respectable white people will do everything in their power to see that justice is maintained and the Negro protected as long as he is in the right. This rioting admittedly got out of hand last Saturday and some colored people suffered from it. However, we feel sure that there will be no aftermath from this trouble, simply because our white citizens will not tolerate mob rule by a few so-called citizens who try to take the law in their own hands, and our colored people should feel secure in this knowledge.

A special session of the Grand Jury has been called for Monday to investigate the rioting and it is our belief that this jury will get to the bottom of the affair and mete out just punishment to those responsible. If the responsibility can be established, there should be no whitewashing simply because whites and blacks are involved.

Several instances are known where white business men took colored people into their places of business and defied the roving bands of irresponsibles to enter and bother them. The cowardice of the mobsters was here demonstrated, because in every instance they backed up when confronted by irate citizens willing to defend the safety of the victims sought by the gangs. This willingness of white employers to defend the rights of their colored employes, with force and violence if necessary, should serve as a warning to any who may have ideas that such a disturbance can be gotten under way again. And it should serve as a reassurance for the Negroes that their rights will be taken care of.—Alabama Courier (Athens).

BATTLEFRONT (ATHENS, ALABAMA)

advertiser

The people of Athens, Alabama, proved Saturday that the mob spirit lies near the surface of human emotions in Alabama as well as in Tennessee.

Two white men had a fist fight with a Negro on the downtown streets. When law officers approached, the Negro fled, but the two white men were arrested. Mobs, in search for the Negro, chased all Negroes from the streets. Judge D. L. Rosenau estimated that between 50 and 100 Negroes were injured, and said that he saw many of the aged and crippled knocked down and trampled. The mob demanded and obtained release of the men from jail.

Most Alabamians will first of all be grateful that there were no fatalities, and not even any serious injuries. It is a credit to Athens and State officers of the law, and to un-named cool heads of the town, that the mob of 500 men broke up without extreme violence. Another indication of serious devotion to duty by law officers is the reported arrest of ten white persons, nine of them in their teens, charged with "inciting to riot." 8-12-46

In analyzing the causes of this flare-up in Athens, Alabama, it is impossible to avoid consideration of the recent election violence just a few miles north at Athens, Tennessee.

Montgomery, Alabama

In Tennessee, mob action was directed against a corrupt political machine that deserved to be ousted. Most observers are agreed that immediate good has come out of the violence. But when one considers the subsequent mob demands at Pell City, Alabama, and this dangerous episode at Athens, Alabama, there is the unmistakable reminder that mobs breed more mobs and more often than not are evil. Loyal citizens must resist the temptation to achieve any desired end by mob action (which is the way of blind emotion, not of thought and justice) and insist upon sure, deliberate justice under the law. Perhaps we of Alabama had an "Athens incident" coming to us. In recent months we have looked down our noses too much at incidents in Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee. While our record has been one for pride, it may be well to have this reminder that peace in 1946 requires not only the best efforts of the world's statesmen at Paris—it requires also the steady Christian restraint of every man of good will in Alabama.

hens

Birmingham, Ala., News
Aug. 11, 1946

Brush With Two Veterans Starts Fight In Streets

No Deaths Reported; '15 Or 20' Injured Before Battling Stops

BY STAFF WRITERS
Morgan Smith and Danny Danenberg

ATHENS, (Ala.) Aug. 10—Race rioting, touched off by a fist fight between two white veterans and a Negro, flared violently in this North Alabama agricultural center Saturday afternoon with an undetermined number of Negroes injured, but several hours later the scene was comparatively quiet as crowds were dispersed from the streets.

The angry mob, estimated to number as many as 500, stormed the steps of the city jail and obtained the release of the two white men, brothers, who had been arrested after the altercation on a downtown street.

Later, the crowd made an unsuccessful citywide search for the Negro who had engaged in the fight with the brothers. Unable to find their quarry, the mob members chased all other Negroes from the streets, using their fists to enforce their orders to "get out of town."

Estimates as to the number of Negroes injured varied, since most of them left the city during the disturbance. State Public Safety Director Van B. Gilbert estimated the number hurt at "15 to 20." None was believed seriously hurt, however, since none sought hospital treatment.

Order was restored by 50 State Highway Patrolmen rushed here from throughout the Northern section of the state and by city and county officers from Decatur and Florence. The State Guard company here was mobilized and later dismissed, while units at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence were alerted for possible duty here.

* * *

EIGHT WHITE PERSONS, ranging in ages from 13 to 46, were arrested and held in the Limestone County Jail when they congregated at the bus station here after being told to disperse.

Officers patrolled the streets after order was restored and remained here throughout the night.

One shot was fired by an officer over the heads of the mob as it stormed the city hall and it lodged harmlessly in a wall.

Witnesses said that gangs of white men sought to enter business places in which Negroes were customers, but were barred by the proprietors who threatened to shoot if the gangs came in. All stores and motion picture shows were closed at 6 p.m.

Directing the efforts to restore order were Public Safety Director Gilbert, Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr.; Charles E. Shaver, representing Gov. Chauncey Sparks; George Quarles, Montgomery, representing the adjutant general's office; Col. James Saliba, Florence, of the Alabama State Guard, and Inspector Joe Smelley of the Highway Patrol in Birmingham.

The rioting was touched off about 2 p.m. when the two brothers, whose last name was given as Massey, brushed against the Negro on a downtown street. Witnesses said the Negro then knocked one of the men down and ran away.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., said he was informed that someone yelled the Negro had run into the Ritz Theater. The brothers, witnesses said, then demanded that Robert Cannon, theater manager, admit them to the Negro balcony, but that he refused and after an argument called police.

* * *

OFFICER J. B. HARGROVE arrived and arrested the two men on charges of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. He took them to the city jail, which is on the town square, directly opposite the courthouse.

Converging on the city hall shortly afterward, the mob demanded the release of the brothers. Mayor Richardson agreed to the release of the two men if the mob would disperse. After the brothers had been turned out of the jail, members of the mob announced they were going to continue their search for the Negro.

One leader in the mob, standing on a bread truck, shouted that the officials were "on the side of the Negroes; we shouldn't let them kick the GIs around." With that, the mob headed back to the theater.

At this time, Judge Rosenau said, Manager Cannon, of the Ritz Theater, telephoned him and asked what to do. He said the crowd was threatening to break into the theater in its search for the Negro. Judge Rosenau advised Cannon to clear the Negro balcony, which he did.

"I went to the theater," Judge Rosenau said, "and the mob was at both the white and Negro entrances. I told the crowd that the manager of the theater was not trying to uphold the Negro or the white man, but was trying to protect his property and the lives of women and children in the theater."

* * *

JUDGE ROSENAU SAID HE told the crowd if it would name six men to go into the theater, he would go with them. He said ringleaders of the gang, one of them being one of the veterans who had been arrested, went with him into the theater.

"They struck matches in the theater in searching for the Negro but they could not see well enough so the showing of the picture was stopped and the lights turned on," Judge Rosenau said.

The mob was assured by its leaders that the Negro was not in the theater, Judge Rosenau said.

"One of the members of the crowd spoke up and said, "'Let's don't let a Negro in the theater again today,'" Judge Rosenau asserted, and then someone else shouted, "'Don't ever let another Negro in the theater.'"

At this point, the judge said, somebody shouted, "'Let's clear the streets of Negroes'" and the crowd started to run wild.

"A number of Negroes were beaten up. They were being beaten up all over town, in the courthouse square and in the outlying districts of Athens," Judge Rosenau declared.

The judge said some of the Negroes who were beaten were "cripples." He said several old Negroes" were knocked down by the mob, and added that a Negro man and his wife were prevented from catching a train. "They were chased under a house," he remarked.

As the mob ordered all Negroes out of town, Wilson White, manager of the bus station here, appealed to officers for aid. Some of the crowd, he reported, had broken down a door at the bus station and ordered out a Negro family that had arrived on a bus from Tennessee.

The Negroes, lugging suitcases, went down the street at a rapid pace after being ordered out of town, White said.

Officers, searching for the Negroes, later found them huddled on the edge of a cornfield near town. They were identified as Dolph Hendricks, his wife, child and a friend, Willie Quick. They were placed on another bus and left town without being harmed.

Negroes Trampled By Crowd

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10. (AP)—A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off race rioting in which between 50 and 100 Negroes were estimated to have been injured, some of them knocked down and trampled, here today.

County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau said old and crippled Negroes were among many he saw knocked down and trampled by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 men at one time.

Thinks 50 To 100 Injured

"I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured," Rosenau reported. "The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

He added that about 10 white men had been arrested.

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law enforcement officers from all over Northern Alabama poured into this agicultural center, of some 5,000 population. A local state guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

Negro Escaped

The two white participants in the fight were arrested but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Judge Rosenau said gangs of white men sought to enter several mercantile places in which Negroes were customers but "they were barred by the proprietors who said they would shoot if the gangs came in."

The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 highway patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in North Alabama.

Athens Quie[illegible] With Leaders [illegible]hind Bars

Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala
8-12-46

[illegible]t 'Teen-Age Youths Held By Authorities; Tripp Urges Harmony

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 11.—(AP)—Guardsmen remained under "alert" orders today and 50 Highway Patrolmen policed Athens to prevent repetition of race rioting which drove all Negroes off the streets with some knocked down and beaten.

County D. L. Rosenau reported "all quiet and peaceful." He said he had seen no Negroes around the courthouse where mobs he estimated to total 1,800 to 2,500 persons yesterday responded to what he termed a mob cry to "clean the streets of Negroes."

Nine white persons, described by Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly." He said eight of the nine were teen-agers, the youngest 13 years old "who carried a club and knocked Negroes down."

Rosenau estimated 50 to 100 Negroes were injured as they were chased from the streets but said none were hurt seriously. He told of seeing "aged Negroes, some women and some children" being knocked down as "the mob, led by a bunch of hoodlums, went temporarily mad."

A more conservative estimate of 15 to 20 injured was made by State Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert. 8-12-46

Order was restored shortly before midnight after the Athens' State Guard was mobilized and companies in three nearby towns were alerted. Athens Guardsmen spent the night at the armory, ready for any emergency.

Absence of weapons, Rosenau said, and lack of organization prevented possible lynchings. Only one of the many persons searched was found to have a pistol.

Rosenau said the riot stemmed from a scuffle between two ex-GI's and a Negro. The white men bumped into the Negro. Words followed, the Negro knocked one of the white men down and fled, Rosenau said.

Police arrested the ex-GI's.

"Word got around that police had arrested two whites and let the Negro go," the judge related. "The crowd began to grow and by the time they raided the city hall, where the jail is, it numbered 1,800 to 2,500. 8-12-46

"They forced the Mayor (R. H. Richardson, Jr.) to let the men out of jail and then a man got up on a truck and made a big speech in which he said 'let's go to the theater and get that Negro.'"

Rosenau explained the theater was near where the GI's bumped into the Negro and someone claimed he was hiding in there. The mob then assembled there but Rosenau had called the management and ordered the balcony, where Negroes sit, cleared immediately. 8-12-46

The judge said he kept the mob from storming the theater by letting it select six men to verify his statement no Negroes were inside.

"I thought the trouble was over but somebody yelled 'let's clean the streets of Negroes' and they were off again," Rosenau said.

He said the mob broke into smaller groups and for several hours chased Negroes from the town. 8-12-46

Rosenau said order was restored when 30 cars of Highway Patrolmen rushed into the town to aid local officers.

He said no further trouble was anticipated but extra officers would be on duty next Saturday "when everybody and his dog" comes to town.

Athens is a North Alabama farming center of about 6,000 persons. Rosenau said about 25 per cent of them are Negroes.

Dr. Frank Tripp, Montgomery, president of the Alabama State Baptist Convention, said last night that "press reports of clashes between the Negroes and the white people of Athens are very disturbing to those of both races who desire to live in harmony."

"If the church people of the Athens community will demonstrate in practice the spirit of genuine Christianity, they can substantially aid in bringing about order. The white and colored people of this great state must live together in peace. And this is a good time for the leaders of both races to demonstrate their leadership ability to that end.

"Race rioting is a dangerous business; it has its beginning in misunderstanding and uncontrolled patience and ends in unspeakable tradegy. Such behavior never permanently settles any issues. When people, white or black, throw off all social and legal restraints and undertake to adjust their difficulties by such methods, none can escape the evil consequences."

TUSKEGEE, ALA., Aug. 11.—(AP)—Dr. F. D. Patterson, president of the Tuskegee Institute had the following to say in regard to the Athens race trouble.

"Much credit is due for the prompt and efficient action of law enforcement officers and substantial citizens who prevented or held to a minimum activity which would have resulted in a more serious outcome.

"Such incidences are particularly to be regretted in view of the growing spirit of tolerance and cooperation between the races in Alabama. Those responsible should be made promptly to feel the full penalty of the law."

ATTACK ON VETERAN'S SISTER REPORTED AS START OF RIOT

Daily World Atlanta, Georgia Tues. 8-13-46

By EMORY O. JACKSON

DECATUR, Ala.— (SNS) — It is said that L. C. Horton, a veteran, was standing in front of the theatre when one of the white Massey brothers slapped and kicked his sister, and Horton defended her with a knife. Police arrested the two brothers and turned Horton lose, it is said. Horton has been spirited out of the city.

The State Highway Patrolmen guarded the Negro section all Saturday night equipped with riot weapons and gas. Negroes who fled back to their homes armed themselves and were ready to defend themselves unto death, it is said.

Things were quiet when I arrived in Athens with the dawn Monday. I sped back to Decatur, 14 miles from Athens to wire this story. Decatur is the scene of one of the Scottsboro trials.

PREACHER BEATEN

Rev. J. R. Powell of Nashville, pastor of James Chapel Baptist Church reportedly arrived by bus during the four hour revolt against law, unable to hire a cab, he was beaten by the mob and ordered off the streets despite his pleas of being a preacher. A total of 50 men and women were said to have been slugged and chased off the streets. None are known to be fatally wounded.

The mob went on jobs and tried to get Negroes with their employers bravely fighting back and defending them. It was said that a white opeator of a filling station locked Robert Caldwell in the white bathroom to hide him from his revolters. White merchants hid their black customers and undergrounded them to safety. An elderly woman was so severely knocked around, beaten and terrified that she lost her purse. The disturbance began at one P. M. and lasted until five P. M. When all the stores wer shut down. Around from two to three thousand whites were estimately in the city mobsters. Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

COMMITTEE FORMED IN ATHENS

An Interracial committee composed of seven white and eight Negr ocitibens met in the Courthouse Sunday to plan action designed to have a special Grand Jury investigate the mass beating of Negro citizens here August 10 by a mob made up of 500 hoodlums, cotton mill workers and cotton patch workers. The mob was dominated b yteen-agers.

While names of the Negro and white committee were not disclosed, they are described as the substantial and best people of this rural city. The Committee would have veteran organizations robed and civil liberties of Negroes protected, it was said. Tues. 8-13-46

Two of the ten Negro churches Sunday suspended services, namely Trinity Congregational, pastored by Rev. J. C. Wilson of Huntsville and Frazier Chapel C. M. E. Church of which Rev. A. H. Harris is the minister. Rev. Wilson was called by Long Distance and told to remain at home as one Baptist minister had been beaten getting off the bus.

GRAND JURY CALLED

Circuit Judge J. H. Crowe of Decatur has called a Special Grand Jury Monday to investigate the mass revolt against law in Athens August 10. Public officials are regretful of the incident and assert that it has been ninety percent exaggerated by daily newspapers reports, a few highway patrolmen are still on duty here.

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50 State Troopers Patrol Town Hit by Race Row

Constitution

Atlanta, Ga.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11—(AP)—Fifty State highway patrolmen maintained peace in Athens Sunday after a riot in which white mobs chased Negroes off the street, injuring an undetermined number in the melee.

Ten white persons, nine of them boys in their teens, were arrested. Chief Van Buren Gilbert, of the State Patrol, described them as "ringleaders," said they would be charged with "inciting to riot." 8-12-46

Authorities said it was impossible to determine the number of Negroes injured since they fled from the town or went to their homes. Gilbert estimated the number at between 15 and 20, none of whom required hospitalization.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau fixed the number at between 50 and 100. He reported seeing many aged and crippled Negroes knocked down and trampled.

The race riot late Saturday was the outgrowth of a fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro. The white men were arrested but Mayor R. H. Richard- when a mob assembled at the jail promised to disperse. Monday

Rosenau said the mobs started chasing the Negroes off the street in their search for the Negro fight participant who fled when officers approached. Sheriff H. G. Garrett said the mobs totaled about 500 men at their height and were sizable four hours later when State Patrolmen arrived to reenforce local officers.

Order was restored shortly before midnight when the local Company of the State Guard had been mobilized. The Company remained on an alert order today along with those in near-by cities but the town was quiet and a few Negroes were on the streets.

Athens Quiet As Grand Jury Forms To Hear Mob Details

News Birmingham, Ala.

Tues 8-13-46

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 13—Selection of members of a special Grand Jury to investigate Saturday's racial disorder was to be made here today by Circuit Court officials with the special session of the jury scheduled to convene Monday.

The names of 36 were drawn here by Circuit Judge James H. Crowe, Jr., and Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnson said 18 of the 36 men will serve on the Grand Jury.

All but 20 members of the Alabama Highway Patrol called here from all parts of the state during the height of the riot have been returned to their normal duties, State Highway Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert reported.

SEVERAL special police officers, most of whom were former members of the Police Department here, had been recalled to duty and were patroling the streets, city officials said.

The city had returned to normalcy and Negroes and white persons went about their day's activities without the slightest indication of the riotous mob rule last Saturday which took over control of the city for several hours and freed two brothers, Ben Massey, 23, of Brown's Ferry, a World War II veteran, and his brother, Roy, 19, a member of the Army Medical Corps now on furlough, County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., reported.

The two brothers remained at their home and no attempt had been made today to rearrest them after they were released from custody by Mayor R. B. Richardson, Jr., at the demand of the mob, estimated at 400 persons or more, Saturday afternoon.

* * *

THE NINE PERSONS, who the sheriff termed "some of the ringleaders" of the mob, including a 13-year-old boy, were all free on bond after spending the week-end in the county jail on charges of unlawful assembly.

As precaution against further racial disturbances next Saturday when both white persons and Negroes "come to town" and congregate around the town square in large numbers while doing their shopping, extra policemen will be placed on duty, city officials said.

Tues 8-13-46

CIRCUIT SOLICITOR George C. Johnson, who was in Athens to confer with city and county officials in reference to the special session of the Grand Jury, said today he would request Circuit Judge James H. Crow to set the trials of any persons indicted by the Grand Jury for "an early date."

The circuit solicitor termed the mob action a "disgrace to a town which has not had any previous racial disorder for 150 years."

County Judge Rosenau said penalties up to five years in the state prison could be imposed on persons found guilty of mob action. He said his county court was limited by law to fines up to $500 and six months in jail, and he would nol prosse cases set for Aug. 26 against any of the nine persons arrested during the week-end if indictments were retruned against them at the special session of the Grand Jury.

Atlanta, Ga., Constitution

Aug. 20, 1946

'Get To Bottom' of Race Riot, Judge Charges Alabama Jury

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 19—(AP)—Circuit Court Judge James Crow, Jr., Monday charged a special jury "to get to the bottom" of the Aug. 10 race riot in which an undetermined number of Negroes were cuffed and chased and 10 white persons arrested.

Some 15 witnesses already have been subpoenaed to appear before the investigating body.

In his charge Judge Crow said "We expect you not to refuse to return indictments because of fear of disfavor.

"If the Grand Jury is weak then you are licensing others to violate our laws. The law is adequate to take care of the conditions. There is no excuse for people to take the law into their own hands. No citizen likes to see the laws of the State violated or the laws flagrantly set aside."

Judge Crow pointed out that the laws of unlawful assembly, a misdemeanor, might apply to the disturbance in which case indictment and conviction would carry a maximum penalty of six months at hard labor, or a fine of $500. He also pointed out that the laws governing riot and rout, a felony, would apply only if property damage results. He advised the Jury too that other laws such as those apply to assault with intent to murder, assault and battery would also apply.

The riot followed an altercation between two brothers, Ben Massey, 23, and Roy Massey, 19, and a Negro. Roy Massey is an Army private and was home on furlough at the time. His brother, Ben, is an ex-GI. The Negro fled and the Massey brothers were arrested by Police Officer J. B. Hargrove.

"Word got around that police had arrested two whites and let the Negro go," County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., said. "The crowd began to grow and by the time they reached the City Hall, where the jail is, it numbered 1,800 to 2,500."

BROTHERS RELEASED

Mayor R. H. Richardson released the Massey brothers when the crowd arrived at the jail. The crowd began dispersing, but was quickly drawn back together when a man mounted a bread truck and exhorted them to find the Negro. Later, someone in the mob yelled "Let's run the Negroes out of town."

Immediately, the mob moved out and Negroes on the streets were chased. Those caught were cuffed and kicked. For two hours the mob ran rampant through the town in search of Negroes.

Grand Jury Indicts 16 in Alabama Riot

The Afro-American

56a Civilian

Baltimore, Md.

Charges Undisclosed; Trials Set for Regular Court Session in Oct.

Sat. 8-31-46

ATHENS, Ala.—After hearing 77 witnesses during a five-day hearing, a grand jury on Aug. 23 indicted 16 persons on undisclosed charges growing out of the Aug. 10 race riot, which was started off by a fight between two white men and a colored veteran.

While the names of those indicted and the charges against them will not be made public until warrants are served, it is believed that they include the nine white persons arrested by State highway policemen on charges of unlawful assembly.

County officers, told of the grand jury's action, said that if the larger body's charges are more severe, the county will drop its charges against the nine who have not been tried yet.

Special Session Refused

Although Solicitor General G. C. Johnson requested a special court session to try the cases, his motion was overruled by Judge James H. Crow Jr., on the grounds that unnecessary expense would be incurred.

Afro-American

As a result, the trials will be held sometime after Oct. 24, during the regular court session.

After the hearings, Frank P. Turner, jury foreman, stated that the jury found that "the number involved was only a small percentage of the original number reported." Baltimore, Md.

Earlier reports had indicated that nearly 2,000 participated in the riot in which colored residents were chased from the streets, knocked down and beaten up.

While some investigations have indicated that the outbreak was more than a race riot, it is known that it was set off by the release of J. C. Horton and the detention of Roy and Ben Massey, white, principals in the fight. Sat. 8-31-46

All three were being taken to the jail by a city officer who released the veteran after the other two continued to strike at him while all three were in custody.

Tues. 8-13-46

GRAND JURY TO STUDY ALABAMA RACE RIOT

Times - New York

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 12 (AP)—A special session of the grand jury next Monday was ordered today to investigate Saturday's race riot and Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnston said he would press for immediate trial of any persons indicted by the jury.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," the solicitor said in a statement. He described the rioting, in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten or trampled, as "a disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

Indictments charging riot and rout, carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the State penitentiary, will be asked, Mr. Johnston said, on "all those connected with this disgraceful affair."

"I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," he added.

Meanwhile, nine persons described by County Judge D. L. Rosenau Jr., as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were released on bond. Ranging in age from 13 to 41, they were charged with unlawful assembly and one faced an additional count of carrying a concealed weapon. Bond was fixed at $300 on each count.

Maximum penalty for conviction of unlawful assembly is a $500 fine and six months in jail. Judge Rosenau said he would nol prosse the lesser charges in favor of those carrying heavier penalties in the event the grand jury indicts any of the nine. They are scheduled to be arraigned before him Aug. 26.

'Get To Bottom' of Race Riot, Judge Charges Alabama Jury

The Constitution Atlanta, Ga. Tues. 8-20-46

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 19—(AP)—Circuit Court Judge James Crow, Jr., Monday charged a special jury "to get to the bottom" of the Aug. 10 race riot in which an undetermined number of Negroes were cuffed and chased and 10 white persons arrested.

Some 15 witnesses already have been subpoenaed to appear before the investigating body.

In his charge Judge Crow said "We expect you not to refuse to return indictments because of fear of disfavor.

"If the Grand Jury is weak, then you are licensing others to violate our laws. The law is adequate to take care of the conditions. There is no excuse for people to take the law into their own hands. No citizen likes to see the laws of the State violated or the laws flagrantly set aside."

Judge Crow pointed out that the laws of unlawful assembly, a misdemeanor, might apply to the disturbance in which case indictment and conviction would carry a maximum penalty of six months at hard labor, or a fine of $500. He also pointed out that the laws governing riot and rout, a felony, would apply only if property damage results. He advised the Jury too that other laws such as those apply to assault with intent to murder, assault and battery would also apply.

The riot followed an altercation between two brothers, Ben Massey, 23, and Roy Massey, 19, and a Negro. Roy Massey is an Army private and was home on furlough at the time. His brother, Ben, is an ex-GI. The Negro fled and the Massey brothers were arrested by Police Officer J. B. Hargrove.

Birmingham, Ala., News
Aug. 13, 1946

Hope Even In Athens

To say that the Athens race riot might have been worse than it was is small comfort. No one was seriously hurt, although a dozen or more Negroes were beaten and several white men are nursing cuts and bruises. Quick work on the part of the city's officials and the coming of armed police forces from the outside helped considerably in quelling what might easily have become as serious an affair as the one in Columbia, Tenn., last Spring.

Like most potential riots, this one had its start in a personal altercation between white men and a Negro. Whichever party was to blame is less important than what happened afterward. The fight ended when officers arrived and placed the white men under arrest; the Negro escaped and has not yet been apprehended. That event in itself should have remained only a minor breach of the peace which the local police force could most certainly have handled without difficulty. But the familiar pattern of Negro-white animosity made itself manifest and a mob formed with the avowed purpose of releasing the white participants and of finding and punishing the Negro who had dared to strike a white man. Then the crowd turned its temper on all colored people, regardless of their lack of participation in the initiating episode. The civil rights of Negroes were once again violated; they were driven from the streets, some were assaulted, and the whole colored community was humiliated.

One of the distressing circumstances revealed by the unhappy [illegible] was the fact that young boys participated. A lad of 13 was arrested along with eight other ringleaders of the mob estimated at more than 500 persons. There is scant hope for restoring good race relations in a community if children lend themselves to the creation of ill-will and the perpetration of violence.

While the whole affair can only be called disgraceful, there were several items that lead one to hope for the future. Numbers of white men endeavored to persuade the crowds to disperse, showing clearly that they were aware of the evil implications and of the wrongs that might ensue. They kept their heads and refused to join in the mob spirit, even endangering their own positions in the community in their desire to restrain the hotheads from vicious action. And a Negro man made his way through the crowd and offered to give himself up to be held as a hostage until his brother could be found. When men of both colors exhibit such courage and common sense, there is still much hope for the betterment of relations between the races.

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50 to 100 Negroes Hurt In Alabama Race Riot

The Courier-Journal

Louisville, Ky. Sun. 8-11-46

Athens, Ala., Aug. 10 (AP)—A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off race rioting in which between 50 and 100 Negroes were estimated to have been injured, some of them knocked down and trampled, here today.

County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau said old and crippled Negroes were among many he saw knocked down and trampled by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 men at one time.

10 White Men Arrested.

"I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured," Rosenau reported. "The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

He added that about 10 white men had been arrested.

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law-enforcement officers from all over northern Alabama poured into this agricultural center of some 5,000 population. A local State Guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p.m.

The two white participants in the fight which started the rioting were arrested, but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Store Owners Bar Gangs.

Judge Rosenau said gangs of white men sought to enter several mercantile places in which Negroes were customers, but "They were barred by the proprietors who said they would shoot if the gangs came in." The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 highway patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in north Alabama.

"I think the worst is over," Rosenau said, "and if we can get through the night without any more trouble, I think it will be finished."

Guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence also were alerted for possible use here.

Charlotte, N. C., Observer
Aug. 12, 1946

ATHENS QUIET AFTER RIOTING

Guardsmen On 'Alert' Orders and Highway Patrolmen Continue On Job.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11.—(AP)—Guardsmen remained under "alert" orders today and 50 highway patrolmen policed Athens to prevent repetition of race rioting which drove all Negroes off the streets with some knocked down and beaten.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau reported "all quiet and peaceful." He said he had seen no Negroes around the courthouse where mobs he estimated to total 1,800 to 2,500 persons yesterday responded to what he termed a mob cry to "clean the streets of Negroes."

Nine white persons, described by Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly." He said eight of the nine were teen-agers, the youngest 13 years old "who carried a club and knocked Negroes down."

MANY INJURED.

Rosenau estimated 50 to 100 Negroes were injured as they were chased from the streets but said none was hurt seriously. He told of seeing "aged Negroes, some women and some children" being knocked down as "the mob, led by a bunch of hoodlums, went temporarily mad."

A more conservative estimate of 15 to 20 injured was made by State Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert. Gilbert and Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., were more conservative also in estimating the size of the mob, placing the total at "not more than 500."

Order was restored shortly before midnight after the Athens' state guard was mobilized and companies in three near-by towns were alerted. Athens guardsmen spent the night at the armory, ready for any emergency.

Absence of weapons, Rosenau said, and lack of organization prevented possible lynchings. Only one of the many persons searched was found to have a pistol.

Rosenau said the riot stemmed from a scuffle between an army private and his ex-GI brother and a Negro. The white men bumped into the Negro as they came out of Cane. Words followed, the Negro knocked one of the white men down and fled, Rosenau said.

Police arrested the ex-GI's.

"Word got around that police had arrested two whites and let the Negro go," the judge related. "The crowd began to grow and by the time they raided the city hall, where the jail is, it numbered 1,800 to 2,500.

"They forced the mayor (R. H. Richardson, Jr.) to let the men out of jail and then a man got up on a truck and made a big speech in which he said 'Let's go to the theater and get that Negro.'"

Rosenau explained that theater was near where the GI's bumped into the Negro and someone claimed he was hiding in there. The mob then assembled there but Rosenau had called the management and ordered the balcony, where Negroes sit, cleared immediately.

The judge said he kept the mob from storming the theater by letting it select six men to verify his statement no Negroes were inside.

"I thought the trouble was over but somebody yelled 'Let's clean the streets of Negroes' and they were off again," Rosenau said.

He said the mob broke into smaller groups and for several hours chased Negroes from the town.

Ben Massey, 23, identified as the veteran in the initial scrap, said the Negro struck him with brass knucks. Reached at his home at Brown's Ferry, near Athens, Massey showed reporters a blackened eye and cuts on the face he said he received in the fight.

Massey said he and his brother, Roy, 19, an army private home on furlough were brushed into by two Negroes as they were leaving a coffee shop. Words were exchanged and Massey said the Negro struck him and fled as a police officer approached.

Eyewitnesses said that after the mayor released thhe Masseys a middle-aged man mounted a truck in front of the city hall and shouted for the crowd to start hunting for the Negro.

Rosenau said order was restored when 30 cars of highway patrolmen rushed into the town to aid local officers.

He said no further trouble was anticipated but extra officers would be on duty next Saturday "when everybody and his dog" comes to town.

Athens is a North Alabama farming center of about 6,000 persons. Rosenau said about 25 per cent of them are Negroes.

Rosenau said the nine arrested would be arraigned before him August 26. He said there were "30 or 40 other ringleaders" but did not know whether they could be identified.

He said W. C. Starkey, a real estate man, tried to get the mob to disperse but "was slugged three times by some mobsters." He suffered slight head wounds.

Rosenau said that in addition to extra policemen here next Saturday the town would be prepared to "turn the fire hose on any mob—nobody with wet clothes wants to lynch anybody."

The judge said a Negro couple and their child were chased from the bus station while awaiting arrival of a bus. He said others were run out of town without being allowed to catch trains.

One shot was fired during the disturbance. Policeman Frank Johnson sent a pistol bullet into a stairway wall, above the heads of the mob members, in an effort to force them from the combination city hall-jail.

Highway Patrolmen went through the Negro section, after order was restored, assuring residents of their protection.

Athens has a police force of four officers and a chief. A four-man sheriff's force also is stationed here.

Riot Flares in Alabama 50 Injured

Star-News Pasadena Calif

Sun 8-11-46

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10. (AP) — A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off race rioting in which between 50 and 100 Negroes were estimated to have been injured, some of them knocked down and trampled, here today.

County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau said old and crippled Negroes were among many he saw knocked down and trampled by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 men at one time.

10 Arrested

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He added that about 10 white men had been arrested.

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law enforcement officers from all over northern Alabama poured into this agricultural center, of some 5,000 population. A local state guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

The two white participants in the fight were arrested but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Worst Over

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Sun 8-11-46

The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 highway patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in north Alabama.

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Cartersville (Ga.) Tribune-News
Aug. 29, 1946

Jury Probing Ala. Race Riot

Athens, Ala.—AP—A procession of witnesse went before a grand jury riot of Saturday a week ago in today as it probed into the race which many negroes were beaten and ten white men were arrested.

The investigation started yesterday. The jury expects to conclude its investigation today or tomorrow but probably will not be able to make its report before Thursday, due to the absence from Athens of Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr.

In charging the jury yesterday Judge Crow said, "It is not necessary to look outside of Alabama for laws to protect its citizens Alabama has those laws that will and can protect each and every citizen in the community."

The riot followed an altercation between two brothers and a Negro. The Negro fled and the white boys were arrested. A mob formed to obtain release and they were freed by Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr.

Plain Talk

Louisiana Weekly

By John M. Lee

The views expressed in this column do not necessarily express the editorial opinion of The Louisiana Weekly.

New Orleans La.

THE BALANCE OF POWER STILL RESTS WITH THE LAWLESS MOBS

8-24-46

The dress rehearsal for the advent of American fascism was held in Athens, Alabama, last week, and this time, the mob was a solid, impressive thing, numbering over two thousand representative southern Americans. Athens, as you must know, is not a large community. A mob of over two thousand persons must indeed be accepted as being truly representative of the law and spirit of the community. Athens, then, is an outlaw community, a lawless hole where the spirit of American Liberty and Freedom was raped and battered with shameless exhibitionism.

Sat

Over one hundred Negroes were bruised and beaten up by the cruel white monsters who write of their superiority in the blood of the defenseless, and only two members of the mob were injured slightly. The old and the crippled and the innocent young were kicked and beaten, and herded from the streets like cattle. Reportedly, only two shots were fired. This, then, is the new order, the new daring of the southern mobster, who feels that the Negro is sufficiently intimidated, so that he can be conquered by the sheer force of numbers.

Always when these pogroms occur, the Negro dares little, less he offend the good people of the community, but it is time now for the Negro to know that the good people in the community do not exist when the mob takes over. The only good people who can stop a rabid mob, are people who are prepared to meet it on their own terms. There is no hesitancy to bring a mad dog to bay because the rest of the dogs in the neighborhood are good tempered.

A mob rampant against the color of a man's skin is as great a menace as is a pack of rabies-infected dogs. Negroes must be prepared to deal with them on this basis. If there is to be any fear, it must be the righteous fear of those who must kill lest they be killed. The law in Alabama is not designed to protect the life and property of Negro Americans. The Federal Government is pussy-footing, ducking delicately around the sensitive nerves of the cracker killers, while Negroes are slaughtered.

Reluctantly, an observer of the American scene must admit that the Hitler formula is in the hands of the American murderers. It will avail us nothing to die cowering in a corner hoping for a miracle. We must know that there is a large and powerful element of lawless, Godless men in the south who are determined to kill off the Negro population. We should prepare to die at a very high cost.

Referring again to the good people in the communities where lynch law and mob violence are higher than the law, we can only ask, "where are they?" Who can say when and where the next massacre will break out? Who dares sit securely aloof, feeling that it can't happen in his community? Living with a stature that is less than that of a man is not living at all.

If a man is ashamed of his color then he can hide, but if a man is afraid to die there is no place he can hide. Some way must be found to protect the Negroes who live in the lawless south. That way must be found by the Negroes themselves. They can no longer believe in the hypocritical promises of the good white people and the inept Federal government. Negroes everywhere are on their own.

8-24-46

Make no mistake about it, when Negroes begin killing whites in self-defense, the Federal government will send troops to protect life and property. If the law of the land is inadequate to protect the lives of American Negroes, then the law of the land is inadequate,—period.

When it is possible for southern mobsters to say, "to hell with the law," we must be prepared to say, "me too," and to brighten our dying loneliness by taking a white soul or two along with us. Patience is no longer a virtue in this matter. Too many Negroes' lives are being lost while those in authority are fumbling trying to find a way to make the murderers respect authority.

We must stand together wherever we are or we will be slowly annihilated. This time, let us make the fascist rendezvous at Athens, Alabama, a rallying point for the mobilization of Negro Americans to fight back.

Good for Alabama!

Times-Dispatch Richmond, Va.

WHEN the news came of the race riot in Athens, Ala., last week end, there undoubtedly were many persons in all parts of the country who were apprehensive lest the incident develop into a worse affair. The outbreak was bad enough as it was; but it might easily have become far more serious. A fist fight between a Negro and a white man resulted in the formation of a mob of hot-heads who set out to beat up the Negro population of the community. Scores of Negroes were attacked, but fortunately no one was killed, and apparently none was seriously injured, although many were hurt. Thurs. 8-15-46

Coming soon after the hideous and particularly wanton lynching of four Negroes in Georgia, and at a time when the race riot in Tennessee several months ago was still fresh in people's memories, the trouble in Alabama caused many of us almost to hold our breaths for fear that it would continue and grow worse.

Happily, that fear has not been borne out. Several days have passed, and things seem well under control in Athens. This is no doubt due to several factors, among them the temperate and law-abiding nature of most of the citizens of this charming old Alabama town. The hot-heads, though they numbered into the hundreds—the estimates of the mob's size vary—were a minority of Athens' population. Mobs almost always represent a minority. The sensible, responsible people of the community showed restraint and good judgment in the excitement.

The most important factor, however, seems to have been the resolute action of some leading citizens—notably COUNTY JUDGE D. L. ROSENAU, JR.—the Athens police, the State highway patrol and the State militia. They brought the situation under control in fairly short order, promptly arrested nine of the rioters, and assured the Negro population of the law's protection. The result was avoidance of the possibility that an ugly affair might become a greater tragedy.

The attitude of the responsible authorities and of the good citizens of Athens seems to have been expressed by CIRCUIT SOLICITOR GEORGE C. JOHNSTON, who, in announcing that he would press for prosecution of members of the mob, declared, "I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County." A special session of the Grand Jury has been called to investigate the riot.

Alabama has had a good record in race relations in recent years. The Athens riot was a blot on that record, but it was not so serious a lapse as it might have been but for cool and courageous action by responsible officials and citizens. Their good work goes far toward erasing the smudge and sets an example for which Alabama deserves high commendation.

Grand Jury Will Study Athens Mob Disorders

Negroes In Athens Streets Are Unmolested; Highway Patrol Remains As Safety Measure

BY DANNY DANENBE
News Staff Writer

Birmingham, Ala. News
Aug. 15, 1946

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 12—Declaring Saturday afternoon's race riot here, in which a number of Negroes were beaten and others chased from the streets, as a "disgrace to a town that has never had race troubles in more than 150 years," Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnson, Athens, today called a special session of the Grand Jury for next Monday to take action on the case.

Solicitor Johnson said Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr., Decatur, has called for the special session for 9 a.m. next Monday, and he added that Judge Crow will arrive here tomorrow or Wednesday to start forming the jury.

A veteran of World War II, Solicitor Johnson termed Saturday's riot as a "disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbances.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County or in any other county in my circuit," Johnson said.

"The Grand Jury will be asked to indict all those connected with this disgraceful affair for riot and rout, which carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the state penitentiary, and I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," Johnson said.

"We must insure that such a disgraceful occurrence that happened in Athens Saturday afternoon never again happens in this county or circuit," the solicitor said.

* * *

COUNTY JUDGE D. L. ROSENAU said all the nine persons arrested had been released on bond today.

The county judge added that in the event indictments are returned against any of the nine men arrested he would nol prosse the cases in his court against them in favor of the trials in Circuit Court.

Quick thinking and action on the part of Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., and State Highway Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert was credited here today with quelling a wild racial disturbance Saturday in which at least a dozen Negroes were beaten by a mob estimated at 500 and two white men were freed from the city jail.

Services at most Negro churches here yesterday were cancelled by their pastors to avoid what they said might be "further incidents."

Where Negroes had been "run out of town" Saturday afternoon and night during the mob rioting, a number of Negroes were seen in the downtown section here Sunday and today and walked the streets unmolested.

About half of the 50 state highway patrolmen who arrived here late Saturday afternoon from all sections of North Alabama still remained on duty today as a security measure.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr. said the nine persons arrested charged with unlawful assembly would be tried before him Aug. 26 He said the penalty for unlawful assembly ranged up to a maximum of a $500 fine and six months in jail.

Eight of the defendants were identified as Allen LeMay, 17; Fred Todd, 44; James Aycock, 13; E. D. Lane, 46; Lewis Robinson, 18; C. T. Robinson, 17; George Aycock, 18, and James Smith, 19.

* * *

MAYOR RICHARDSON'S ACTION in releasing Ben Massey, 23, and his brother, Roy, 19, from jail promptly as the mob surged on the city jail and was being held at bay by two officers armed with pistols and tear gas bombs, was held here by city and county officials to have prevented bloodshed at the jail. One shot was fired over the crowd by a policeman as the group sought to obtain release of the two brothers by force.

State Highway Patrol Chief Gilbert, who lives only 10 miles from Athens, near the Tennessee-Alabama line, was highly praised by Mayor Richardson and Sheriff Garrett for promptly rushing 50 highway patrolmen to Athens during the height of the riot. As soon as the officers arrived, Mayor Richardson said, many of the mob began to disburse and return to their homes.

A statewide radio hookup with other offices of the patrol was set up as a means of obtaining reinforcements within a short time, Patrol Chief Gilbert said, but this proved unnecessary.

Nearby cities of Decatur, Florence, Huntsville and other places responded to the call from the mayor by sending a number of their officers here while the highway patrolmen were on the way.

At their homes here today on a rural route about five miles from Athens, Ben Massey, veteran of four years in the Army including 19 months in the Pacific, and his brother, Roy, an Army private, home on furlough, recalled events which led up to gathering of the mob.

* * *

BEN MASSEY SHOWED NEWS reporters cuts on his face and a blackened eye which he said was inflicted by a Negro using brass knuckles. Roy Massey showed a cut on his left hand, which he said he received during an altercation with a Negro, armed with a knife.

"Me and Roy had just come out of a sandwich shop Saturday afternoon when two Negroes bumped into me," said Ben Massey. "I asked one of the Negroes where the hell he thought he was going. He said 'Where the hell you think you are going.'"

"The next thing I knew," Ben continued, "I was struck between the eyes with a pair of brass knuckles. I struck back and knocked the Negro down. Then Roy pitched in as the second Negro started for me with a knife. Roy's hand was bleeding and a policeman started toward us from down the street. Both Negroes began to run and one of them ran into the Negro entrance of the picture show.

"The policemen got us by the arm and hauled us off to jail and we could hear lots of fellows behind us telling the cops to arrest the Negroes too as well as the white men."

Clayborn (Crow) Massey, father of the two brothers, said he saw a crowd gathering in the direction of the jail and started there too when someone stopped him and said, "they've just put your boys in jail after two Negroes jumped on them."

* * *

THE ELDER MASSEY said there was a good-sized crowd at the jail when he got there and he was recognized and shoved through the crowd to the front, where two policemen were standing at the head of the stairs pointing pistols at the crowd.

"About that time one of the policemen fired a shot but it didn't scare that crowd a bit," Clayborn Massey said.

He said Mayor Richardson told him he could get his two boys and 'take them home' and about that time his sons appeared from the jail. The three of them left the city hall and headed for their home, he said.

Mayor Richardson, who is an insurance agent and serves as mayor part time, said the still restless crowd then surged into the street shouting "Let's run all the Negroes out of town." A number of Negroes who were then on downtown streets were set upon by the mob and beaten and "run out of town," he said.

The mayor said he immediately called Highway Patrol Chief Gilbert and appraised him of the situation. Gilbert in turn, the mayor said, notified the other nearby law enforcement agencies.

Mayor Richardson explained that most of the town's population are farm people and come into town on Saturday to shop. Had the same incident occurred on any other day except Saturday, Mayor Richardson said, "there probably wouldn't have been much to it."

Gangs of 2,000 Chase Negroes Off Streets as Fist Fight Climax

Guard Is Alerted

Highway Patrol, Local Guard, Police Restore Order; Stores Are Closed

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"I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured," Rosenau reported. "The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

He added that about ten white men had been arrested.

Order Is Restored

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law enforcement officers from all over Northern Alabama poured into this agricultural center, of some 5,000 population. A local State guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

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"I think the worst is over," Rosenau said, "and if we can get through the night without any more trouble, I think it will be finished."

State Guard Alerted

Guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence also were alerted for possible use here.

At Montgomery, State Highway Patrol Chief Clyde C. Sellers said 40 or 50 patrolmen were sent into Athens to aid local officers. Mayor Richardson said he did not believe there would be further trouble, but thought the State Guard should be brought here as a "precautionary measure."

Judge Rosenau said he knew of several "old Negroes" being knocked down by the gang, and added that a Negro man and his wife were prevented from catching a train.

Chased Under a House

"They were chased under a house," the judge reported.

Sheriff H. G. Garrett estimated the mob numbered 2,000 men at one time and said it was still sizable three and a half hours after the trouble started.

Garrett said the white men were being constantly urged to be orderly. He added that many had "gone home" and he hoped no serious trouble would develop.

"During the height of the disturbance, bands of 50 to 100 white boys and young men would form in a flash at the sight of a Negro," said B. C. Shelton, publisher of the Decatur, Ala., Daily.

Would Push and Shove

"They would push, shove or strike the Negro—trying to get him out of town," added Shelton, who came from nearby Decatur to help cover the outbreak.

The publisher said that two white men were slightly injured by members of one of the mobs which they attempted to disperse.

He added that so far as he learned no one was admitted to a hospital for treatment and only one shot was fired.

"An officer pointed his gun in the direction of a band of white men advancing towards the city jail," Shelton related. "A fellow officer knocked his arm upward and the bullet went into a wall."

The two white men involved in the fist fight that started the trouble were held in the jail for a short time.

The town has a population of about 5,000, of whom about one-third are Negroes. Sheriff Garrett said his force of four or five deputies and about the same number of city officers, together with "some help" from the State Highway Patrol, was seeking "to keep the peace."

The incident which touched off the racial disturbance was described by the sheriff as a "fist fight" between two white boys and a Negro boy. "It occurred early in the afternoon, in front of the picture show," he reported. "City police arrested the two white boys, but the Negro got away.

Orlando, Fla., Morning Sentinel
Aug. 12, 1946

Guard Remains Under 'Alert' In Race Riots

Mob Action Checked In Alabama City

ATHENS, Ala. [AP] Guardsmen remained under "alert" orders yesterday and 50 highway patrolmen policed Athens to prevent repetition of race rioting which drove all Negroes off the streets with some knocked down and beaten.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau reported "all quiet and peaceful." He said he had seen no Negroes around the Court House where mobs he estimated to total 1,800 to 2,500 persons Saturday responded to what he termed a mob cry to "clean the streets of Negroes."

Nine White persons, described by Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly." He said eight of the nine were teen-agers, the youngest 13 years old "who carried a club and knocked Negroes down."

Rosenau estimated 50 to 100 Negroes were injured as they were chased from the streets but said none was hurt seriously. He told of seeing "aged Negroes, some women and some children" being knocked down as "the mob, led by a bunch of hoodlums, went temporarily mad."

A more conservative estimate of 15 to 20 injured was made by State Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert. The patrol chief and Mayor R. R. Richardson Jr. also estimated that the mob never exceeded 500.

Order was restored shortly before midnight Saturday after the Athens' State Guard was mobilized and companies in three nearby towns were alerted. Athens guardsmen spent the night at the Armory, ready for any emergency.

Absence of weapons, Rosenau said, and lack of organization prevented possible lynchings. Only one of the many persons searched was found to have a pistol.

Rosenau said the riot stemmed from a scuffle between an Army private and his ex-GI brother and a Negro. The White men bumped into the Negro as they came out of a cane field. Words followed, the Negro knocked one of the White men down and fled, Rosenau said.

Police arrested the ex-GIs.

"Word got around that police had arrested two Whites and let the Negro go," the judge related. "The crowd began to grow and by the time they raided the city hall, where the jail is, it numbered 1,800 to 2,500.

"They forced the Mayor [R. H. Richardson Jr.] to let the men out of jail and then a man got up on a truck and made a big speech in which he said 'Let's got to the theater and get that Negro'."

Rosenau explained that theater was near where the GIs bumped into the Negro and someone claimed he was hiding in there. The mob then assembled there but Rosenau had called the management and ordered the balcony, where Negroes sit, cleared immediately.

The Judge said he kept the mob from storming the theater by letting it select six men to verify his statement no Negroes were inside.

"I thought the trouble was over but somebody yelled 'Let's clean the streets of Negroes' and they were off again," Rosenau said.

He said the mob broke into smaller groups and for several hours chased Negroes from the town.

Rosenau said order was restored when 30 cars of highway patrolmen rushed into the town to aid local officers.

Knoxville [illegible] Journal
Aug. [illegible]

Athens, Ala., Riot Injures Nearly 100

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10 (AP)—A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off race rioting in which between 50 and 100 Negroes were estimated to have been injured, some of them knocked down and trampled, here today.

County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau said old and crippled Negroes were among many he saw knocked down and trampled by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2000 men at one time.

"I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured," Rosenau reported. "The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

He added that about 10 white men had been arrested.

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law enforcement officers from all over Northern Alabama poured into this agricultural center, of some 5000 population. A local state guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

The two white participants in the fight were arrested but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Judge Rosenau said gangs of white men sought to enter several mercantile places in which Negroes were customers but "they were barred by the proprietors who said they would shoot if the gangs came in."

The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 highway patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in North Alabama.

"I think the worst is over," Rosenau said, "and if we can get through the night without any more trouble, I think it will be finished."

Guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence also were alerted for possible use here.

At Montgomery, State Highway Patrol Chief Clyde Sellers said 40 or 50 patrolmen were being sent into Athens to aid local officers.

Mayor Richardson said he did not believe there would be further trouble, but thought the state guard should be brought here as a "precautionary measure."

Judge Rosenau said he knew of several "old Negroes" being knocked down by the gang, and added that a Negro man and his wife were prevented from catching a train.

"They were chased under a house," the judge reported.

Garrett said the white men were being constantly urged to be orderly. He added that many had "gone home" and he hoped no serious trouble would develop.

The town has a population of about 5000, of whom about one-third are Negroes. Sheriff Garrett said his force of four or five deputies and about the same number of city officers, together with "some help" from the State Highway Patrol, was seeking "to keep the peace."

The incident which touched off the racial disturbance was described by the sheriff as a "fist fight" between two white boys and a Negro boy.

"It occurred early in the afternoon in front of the picture show," he reported. "City police arrested the two white boys, but the Negro got away.

"A crowd of whites gathered and demanded the release of the white boys. The mayor (R. H. Richardson) turned them loose."

He said the chasing of the Negroes off the streets began soon afterwards, and that within a short time there were few Negroes to be seen.

Sheriff Garrett called the fist fighters "boys," but later declared he understood that the white youths involved were war veterans.

JURY TOLD TO SHUN FEAR

Times
New York N.Y.

Judge Demands Inquiry 'Get to Bottom' of Alabama Riot

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 19 (AP)—Circuit Court Judge James Crow Jr., charged a special jury today "to get to the bottom" of the race riot of Aug. 10 in which an undetermined number of Negroes were cuffed and chased and ten white persons arrested.

Some fifteen witnesses already have been subpoenaed to appear before the investigating body.

In his charge Judge Crow said "we expect you not to refuse to return indictments because of fear of disfavor. Tues 8-20-46

"If the grand jury is weak, then you are licensing others to violate our laws. The law is adequate to take care of the conditions. There is no excuse for people to take the law into their own hands. No citizen likes to see the laws of the State violated or the laws flagrantly set aside."

The riot followed an altercation between two brothers, Ben Massey, 23 years old, and Roy Massey, 19, and a Negro.

Nine Whites Held in Jail

The Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

Cripples and Aged Kicked in Streets

FIGHT BLAMED

Sat. 8-17-46

Reserves to Be Used in Town Saturday

By EMORY O. JACKSON

ATHENS, Ala.—Some 100 persons, many of them aged and crippled men and women, as well as children, were trampled under foot here Saturday by irate whites intent on a race riot after a clash between two white and two colored men.

Altogether between 1,800 and 2,500 whites participated in the riot, bent on "cleaning the streets of all colored people." Nine persons, eight of them teen-agers, were arrested and held in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly."

Describing them as ringleaders of the mob, Chief Van Buren Gilbert of the State patrol said later that they would be charged with "inciting to riot."

Special Jury Hearing Set

Circuit Judge J. H. Crowe of Decatur has called a special grand jury for Aug. 18 to investigate the mass revolt against the law here Aug. 10.

Public officials have expressed regret over the incident and assert taht it has been 90% exaggerated by daily newspapers.

4-Man Fight Blamed

The riot, according to County Judge D. L. Rosenau, followed a fight which occurred after Ben and Roy Massey, white brothers, and two colored men bumped into one another upon leaving a cafe.

During the fight, one of the colored men struck one of the brothers and fled with his companion who one brother said had whipped out a knife and cut him in the hand.

Police Officer J. B. Hargrove arrived on the scene and arrested the two brothers on charges of drunkenness and disorderly conduct and put them in jail. A number of young white spectators followed. The Afro-America

Clayborn (Crow) Massey, father of the jailed brothers, came to the jailhouse, pushed his way through the crowd as two police officers with drawn guns held the crowd at bay on the jail steps.

Plan Riot After Release

Mayor R. H. Richardson Jr. came to the jail scene and explained to the gathering that if they would leave, the two brothers would be released. He released them to the father without bond or charges. Baltimore, Md.

On release of the brothers, however, a leader voicing the crowd yelled: "Let's get the n—s."

A mob estimated at 500 milled about the streets, tried business places where colored people traded, but were barred by the proprietors who threatened to defend their customers with guns.

Officers' Tactics Resented

The mob, led by the two brothers, went to the Ritz Theater where they had heard the man who fled was hiding, and forced Manager Robert Cannon to let them search the balcony.

Unable to find the sought men, the mob went warring against all colored people caught on the streets, beating cripples, the aged, infirm and unprotected.

One mob leader, seeing the way police were trying to handle the situation, shouted that if the officers "are on the side of the colored people, we shouldn't let them kick the GI's around."

To Prevent Repetition

This incident occurred about 2 p.m. Saturday, a day on which the town of 5,000, approximately evenly divided, is filled with visiting farmers. Sat. 8-17-46

Despite the quiet and order which the police officers finally were able to restore, Judge Rosenau said that extra policemen would be on hand next Saturday to prevent a repetition of the riot.

In addition, he stated that the town would be prepared to "turn the fire hose on any mob—nobody with wet clothes wants to lynch anybody."

No Weapons—No Lynchings

The reason that no one was injured more seriously, he added, was that the mobsters lacked weapons and were not well organized.

The Masseys live at Browns Ferry, a rural route about five miles from Athens. Athens proper is located about 105 miles northeast of Birmingham. In addition to a police force of four men and a chief, it has a four-man sheriff force.

Church Services Suspended

Colored ministers suspended church services Sunday to avoid furtherance of the incident.

Most of the 50 State highway patrolmen summoned to the scene under State Highway Patrol Chief Gilbert, a native of Athens, had returned to their routine duties Monday.

Ten Arrested In Race Clash At Athens, Ala.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10.—(AP)—A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off violent but short-lived race rioting Saturday with an undetermined number of Negroes injured, some of them knocked down and trampled by mobs of white men racing through the streets.

Law-enforcement officers, who converged on this North Alabama agricultural center to assist in speedily dispersing the mobs, said a close check of the injured was impossible because the Negroes got out of town or went into seclusion in their homes.

Van B. Gilbert, chief of the state highway patrol who arrived shortly after the disturbance began, said he estimated 15 to 20 Negroes were hurt, none seriously.

A higher estimate was made by County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau, who said he believed between 50 and 100 Negroes were injured. He said he saw old and crippled Negroes among many knocked down by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 at one time.

Chief Gilbert reported that 10 ringleaders had been arrested and placed in the county jail. No charges were filed immediately.

The highway patrol chief added that the local company of the state guard had been demobilized after standing by for several hours. Other guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence had been alerted but Gilbert said the highway patrol had things well in hand and the guardsmen would not be needed.

Highway patrol cars were sent through the Negro district to assure residents there they would "be taken care of," Gilbert reported.

He said of the 10 men taken into custody, only one was carrying a pistol.

Judge Rosenau said earlier "I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured. The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

The two white participants were arrested but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson Jr. said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

56a 1946 Civilian (Alabama--Athens)

Negroes Trampled As Fight Touches Off New Race Riot

Battle Between Negro And Two White Vets Leads To 100 Injured In Alabama

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10. (AP) — A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off race rioting in which between 50 and 100 Negroes were estimated to have been injured, some of them knocked down and trampled, here today.

County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau said old and crippled Negroes were among many he saw knocked down and trampled by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 men at one time.

"I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured," Rosenau reported. "The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

He added that about 10 white men had been arrested.

The judge said a semblance of order was restored about nightfall after law enforcement officers from all over Northern Alabama poured into this agricultural center, of some 5,000 population. A local state guard company was mobilized to help keep the peace.

All stores and moving picture places closed at 6 p. m.

The two white participants in the fight were arrested but the Negro escaped.

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Judge Rosenau said gangs of white men sought to enter several mercantile places in which Negroes were customers but "they were barred by the proprietors who said they would shoot if the gangs came in."

50 Highway Patrolmen On Duty

The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 highway patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in North Alabama.

"I think the worst is over," Rosenau said, "and if we can get through the night without any more trouble, I think it will be finished."

Guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence also were alerted for possible use here.

"During the height of the disturbance, bands of 50 to 100 white boys and young men would form in a flash at the sight of a Negro," said B. C. Shelton, publisher of the Decatur, Ala., Daily.

"They would push, shove or strike the Negro—trying to get him out of town," added Shelton, who came from nearby Decatur to help cover the outbreak.

2 White Men Slightly Hurt

The publisher said that two white men were slightly injured by members of one of the mobs which they attempted to disperse.

He added that so far as he learned no one was admitted to a hospital for treatment and only one shot was fired.

"An officer pointed his gun in the direction of a band of white men advancing towards the city jail," Shelton related. "A fellow officer knocked his arm upward and the bullet went into a wall."

The two white men involved in the first fight that started the trouble were held in the jail for a short time.

At Montgomery, State Chief Clyde C. Sellers said 40 or 50 patrolmen were being sent into Athens to aid local officers. Mayor Richardson said he did not believe there would be further trouble, but thought the state guard should be brought here as a "precautionary measure."

All Negroes Knocked Down

Judge Rosenau said he knew of several "old Negroes" being knocked down by the gang, and added that a Negro man and his wife were prevented from catching a train.

"They were chased under a house," the judge reported.

Garrett said the white men were being constantly urged to be orderly. He added that many had "gone home" and he hoped no serious trouble would develop.

The town has a population of about 5,000, of whom about one-third are Negroes. Sheriff Garrett said his force of four or five deputies and about the same number of city officers, together with "some help" from the state highway patrol, was seeking "to keep the peace."

The incident which touched off the racial disturbance was described by the sheriff as a "fist fight" between two white boys and a Negro boy.

"It occurred early in the afternoon in front of the picture show," he reported. "City police arrested the two white boys, but the Negro got away.

"A crowd of whites gathered and demanded the release of the white boys. The mayor (R. H. Richardson) turned them loose."

He said the chasing of the Negroes off the streets began soon afterwards, and that within a short time there were few Negroes to be seen.

Sheriff Garrett called the fist fighters "boys," but later declared he understood that the white youths involved were war veterans.

Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
Aug. 13, 1946

Citizens All

Athens, Ala., has approximately 6,000 citizens. Under American standards of justice, they all have equal rights under the law. They all pay taxes of one sort or another. They all are expected to defend their country in time of war. They are under the same government, talk the same language, worship the same God. They are educated in similar schools. They all are parts of a closely inter-woven and inter-dependent economy.

One fourth of those citizens of Athens belong to a racial minority group. But these have the same rights as do the majority group. To deny that is to align oneself with the spirit of Nazism and Fascism. That is the kind of doctrine preached by Hitler and enforced in the concentration camps of Dachau and Belsen. It is the spirit of *Mein Kampf*, not the spirit of the United States Constitution or the Declaration of Independence.

Those white hoodlums who roamed the streets of Athens last Saturday afternoon and night were in effect spiritual allies with Goebbels and Mussolini. They were for the time being acting like the Japanese who with bayonets prodded Americans on the death march of Bataan. They were not living up to their American heritage.

It was fortunate, one might say, that no blood was shed, that the mob was thwarted in its search for a victim. One can gather a grain of comfort from the fact that law enforcement officers were quickly on the scene and alert to their duty. There is a measure of satisfaction in the knowledge that most citizens of Athens apparently did not condone the actions of the hoodlums, and that all persons could walk the streets the next day without molestation.

But it was a hair-trigger situation. It could easily have become a major tragedy and a major blot upon the names of Athens and Alabama and America. As it was, it was a depressing defeat in the war to achieve better human relations in our own country and thereby to promote international peace. The loss sustained by the forces of justice can and should be recouped in part by vigorous and prompt prosecution of all persons who in any way encouraged this manifestation of un-American mob spirit.

Arrest Seven In Alabama Race Riot

Johnson City, Tenn. Chronicle
Aug. 25, 1946

— Seven white men were arrested here today and nine other persons were sought on indictments returned by a special grand jury which investigated the Aug. 10 race riot.

All of those arrested were charged with unlawful assembly, a misdemeanor, and were released on $500 bond in each indictment. Two of those arrested were indicted on two counts.

Sheriff H. J. Garrett said he expected to complete the serving of the warrants over the weekend.

He listed those under arrest as: H. S. Todd, two counts; Lewis Robinson, two counts; John Morgan, Roy Hargrove, Elam Cox, Archie Lauderdale and Elam Hamilton.

The Aug. 10 riot followed an altercation between a negro and two white men. Crowds gathered in the streets and negroes were beaten and chased. Several were slightly injured, but none required hospitalization.

A special grand jury was impaneled, and began taking testimony Monday following circuit Judge James Crow's charge to the members that the body was not called to whitewash the outbreak.

Testimony was heard from 77 witnesses before the jury made its final report and was discharged yesterday.

ATHENS QUIET AFTER RIOTING LAST SATURDAY IN WHICH MOBSTERS CHASED AND ABUSED A NUMBER OF NEGROES

Nine Arrested and Jailed In Disturbance. Grand Jury To Investigate

Athens returned to normal this week following a flare-up last Saturday which was described in daily newspapers and over the radio as a "race riot," despite the fact that a comparatively few people took part in the actual disturbance and that most of these were teen age boys who did not know what is was all about.

Trouble started when two brothers, Roy Massey, 19, who has been in the Army seven months and was home on furlough, and Ben, 23, who was discharged in January, bumped into a negro, identified in one newspaper as L. C. Horton, a tenant farmer. The Massey boys, sons of Clairborne "Crow" Massey who lives about 12 miles out Browns Ferry road, said the negro hit Ben with a pair of brass knucks, whereupon Ben knocked him into the street. They claimed that a second negro, who was not identified, struck at Ben and that Roy then hit him.

MORE POLICE ADDED

Several extra officers have been added to the city police force and more will be added this week, according to Mayor Richardson, who said that this was being done to insure adequate suppression of any trouble which might flare up again.

The Massey boys said the negroes then ran, one around the corner and they thought the other went into the Ritz Theatre. They insisted on entering the theatre after him and R. N. Cannon, manager of the theatre, tried to reason with them. Meanwhile officers were called.

Officers Jess Hargrove and Stroud Norton arrested the boys and took them to City Hall where they were held for being drunk and disorderly.

A crowd began to gather around City Hall, where the jail is located, and soon numbered several hundred, mostly farmers in town for Saturday trading who were curious as to what was going on, and teen age boys.

A few self-delegated leaders began to urge the crowd to demand the release of the boys since the negroes involved were not arrested.

The "hotheads," some of whom were said to be drinking, urged the crowd on and the screen doors of City Hall were ripped down.

In the meantime, Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., was called from his home, and arriving on the scene tried to reason with the group. Prior to this M. S. Kennemer, City Clark and commander of the local State Guard unit, had also tried to talk them out of their demands for the release of the two Massey boys.

Night officers Frank Johnson and Frank Lewis were called and stood at the head of the stairs leading to the lockup. The crowd surged up the steps several times and finally, according to witnesses, Johnson raised his gun in the direction of the crowd and fired. It was said that Lewis knocked his arm up and the bullet went above the crowd lodging in the wall.

Mayor Richardson said that he agreed to let the boys go in the custody of two friends and their father, and they were released.

Although the boys were released, certain elements of the crowd were not satisfied and kept up their shouting. Finally, H. S. "Chigger" Todd mounted a truck, according to eye witnesses, and harangued the crowd, urging them on. (This week Todd published a statement expressing regret and shame for his part in the rioting.)

Following the release of the Massey boys a group returned to the theatre and finally a group of six were allowed to search the theatre for the negro. The show was stopped and the lights turned on. The search was futile.

From here on the so-called mob broke up into small bands and roamed the city seeking negroes with blind malice, intent only on carrying in their lust for excitement. They caught and beat the old, the crippled, the young, the defenseless.

It was here that they ran into trouble, although they did beat and bloody several unfortunate negroes, when they attempted to enter stores and places of business and were met by irate proprietors with guns who defied the bands to enter. In every instance reported the groups quickly went on their way when they met real resistance.

Business men have been highly commended for their action in protecting both their colored employees and customers, and represented the real spirit of the citizens of the town in trying to break up the disturbance. They were quick to point out that no decent and respectable citizen in Athens took part in the mob scenes and dioting and blamed a small group of hoodlums and teen age youth for the entire affair.

State patrolmen had been summoned and quickly spread around town, arresting some and gradualy restoring order. Some fifty troopers were in town in a short time, and some remained until Monday.

Nine persons were arrested and placed in the county jail Saturday night. They were charged with unlawful assembly and bond set at $300 with hearing scheduled for August 26. However, since the grand jury has been called into special session for August 19, action of that group will probably take precedence over these charges.

The nine arrested were:

Lewis V. Roberson, 18, of North Athens.

C. T. Roberson, 17, brother of Lewis.

George Aycock, 18, of Athens.

James Aycock, 13, brother of George.

Fred Todd, 44, of Huntsville Highway.

James Smith, 19, Address unlisted.

Alley LeMay, 17, North Athens.

Norrie Hamilton, 20, Address unlisted.

Charles Camody, Jr., 21, Address unlisted.

Lewis Roberson also had an additional charge of carrying a pistol against him. Bond was made by all of them by Monday.

The theatre closed, as did all business establishments, around 6 o'clock. Only two officers were on duty at the time the rioting started and Chief Ed Evans was home sick. Sheriff Garrett was the only county officer in town, his deputies being in Ardmore at the time.

Decatur sent its chief of police and ten officers. The local State Guard was mobilized but held at the armory. Other nearby towns alerted their units.

As an aftermath of the outbreak last Saturday, local citizens are warning that they will not tolerate any such actions again, saying that if necessary they will pick up firearms and break up any attempts to start any more trouble.

Thoroughly disgusted with the unwelcome and inaccurate publicity which the town has received, organizations, civic groups and individual vitizens are expressing their opinions in no uncertain terms and are using every effort to see that no such disturbance occurs again.

Investigation Ordered In Race Riot

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 12 (AP)—A special session of the grand jury was ordered today to investigate Saturday's race riot and circuit solicitor George C. Johnson said he would press for immediate trial of any indicted by the jury.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," the solicitor said in a statement. He described the rioting in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten or trampled as "a disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

Indictments charging riot and rout carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the state penitentiary, will be asked, Johnston said, on "all those connected with this disgraceful affair x x x."

"I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," he added.

Judge To Arrive

Circuit Judge James H. Crow Jr., of Decatur will arrive tomorrow or Wednesday to begin organizing the grand jury, which will then be called into special session next Monday.

Meanwhile, nine persons described by County Judge D. L. Rosenau Jr., as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were released on bond. Ranging in age from 13 to 41, they were charged with unlawful assembly, and one faced additional count of carrying a concealed weapon. Bond was fixed at $300 on each count.

Maximum penalty for conviction of unlawful assembly is a $500 fine and six months in jail. Judge Rosenau said he would nol prosse the lesser charges in favor of those carrying heavier penalties in the event the grand jury indicts any of the nine. They are scheduled to be arraigned before Rosenau August 26.

Rosenau estimated that between 50 and 100 Negroes were beaten by mobs of white men he said totaled more than 2000 at the height of the disturbance. A more conservative estimate was made by State Highway Patrol Director Van Buren Gilbert, who placed the injured at 15 or 20 and the mob as about 500.

Fight Starts Riot

The riot was touched off in mid-afternoon by a fight between a former veteran and his GI brother and a Negro on an Athens street jammed with the usual Saturday afternoon farmer shopping crowd, Rosenau said.

The judge said Ben Massey, 23, the veteran, and Roy Massey, 19, his brother, an Army private, were taken into custody by police. The Negro, who Ben Massey said struck him with brass knucks, escaped.

A mob estimated at several hundred moved on the combination city hall-jail and demanded release of the Massey brothers. The only shot of the disturbance was fired at this time by a city policeman seeking to keep the mob from jamming into the building

Mayor R. H. Richardson Jr. said he then ordered the release of the Massey brothers in an effort to get the mob to disperse, but that someone shouted "let's clear the streets of Negroes" and gangs of white men began attacking Negroes whenever they appeared on the streets.

The mayor said the Masseys were released without charge and no charge was filed against them today.

Order was restored about nightfall after arrival of 50 armed state highway potrolmen. The local state guard company was mobilized and other companies in nearby cities were alerted. None, however, was called into service.

In an aftermath, Mayor Richardson said Sunday services at practically all Negro churches in Athens were cancelled by their pastors to avoid what they said might be "further incidents."

9 IN JAIL FOLLOWING VIOLENCE

Street Fight Develops After Racial Clash Gains Momentum

LOCAL POLICE UNIT STILL REINFORCED

Negro Ministers Cancel Services At Churches As Precaution

BY DANNY DANENBURG

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11—Peace and order had been restored to this North Alabama agricultural center today in the wake of mob violence late yesterday in which two brothers, Ben Massey, 23, a veteran, and Roy 19, an Army private, home on furlough, were freed from the city jail after being arrested on disorderly conduct charges.

Some of the 50 state highway patrolmen sent here from all parts of the state by State Highway Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert, whose home is here, had returned to their normal duties while others remained to reinforce the local police force of half a dozen men.

Most of the large Negro population of Athens, nearly half of the town's total of about 5,000, remained in their homes and their pastors cancelled church services for Sunday to avoid "further incidents."

Nine Are In Jail

Some nine white persons, ranging in age from 13 ot 46, spent the week-end in the county jail here after being arrested last night on charges of unlawful assembly.

Sheriff H. G. Garrett said the group had refused to disperse late Saturday night after being warned by both city and county officers.

At their home at Brown's Ferry, about five miles from Athens on a rural route, Ben Massey exhibited cuts about his face and a blackened eye which he said was inflicted by a Negro armed with brass knuckles.

Roy Massey showed Age-Herald reporters a cut on his finger which he said was received when defending himself from a Negro, armed with a knife. Roy is in the Army Medical Corps and is home on a 15-day furlough. He said he entered the Army seven months ago.

The older Massey brother, who was discharged from the Army after nearly four years of service, including 19 months in the Pacific war theater, said he and his brother, Roy, had just left a coffee shop downtown when two Negro pedestrians brushed against them. He said words were exchanged between the Negroes and himself and his brother and that a Negro struck him with brass knuckles and then fled from the scene as police approached.

Tthe other Negro, according to Roy Masseey, pulled out a knife and after cutting him in the hand, fled into a nearby theater.

Officer J. B. Hargrove arrived on the scene about this time, Roy Massey said, and placed himself and and brother under arrest, and took them to the ctiy jail while a number of young men followed.

At the jail the group, including boys ranging in age from 13 to 15, demanded release of the two brothers and arrest of the Negro, officers said.

As the crowd grew in numbers the father of the two arrested brothers, Clayborn (Crow) Massey, a farmer, arrived on the scene at the jail and was pushed forward through the crowd to the front as two city policemen with drawn pistols held the crowd at bay on the jail steps, according to police investigators.

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., the officers said, then offered to release the Massey brothers to their father and to let him "take them home" with the provision the crowd disperse.

The crowd refused to budge, Mayor Richardson said, but he released the brothers without bond and without any charges pending against them.

Outside the city hall as the brothers were being released, the officers said, a man mounted the top of a bread truck and shouted to the crowd to find the Negroes involved.

The crowd then went to the theater, operated by Robert Cannon, manager, and demanded they be admitted to the Negro balcony, police said.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau appeared at the theater and offered to go with "six men" of the crowd to find the Negroes believed to be hiding there. When the crowd insisted upon entering the theater in a body the manager stopped the show, ordered the theater emptied entirely of patrons and locked the doors.

The crowd then scattered in all directions and struck numerous Negroes they encountered upon the streets, officers said. They went to the bus station and ordered several Negroes out of the waiting room, but these Negroes were later found by police and placed aboard a bus.

As the crowd milled about the city reaching its maximum strength of about 500, according to County Judge Rosenau, state highway patrolmen, answering the emergency call of Patrol Chief Van Gilbert, converged on the city and soon had restored peace and order with many of the crowd leaving the city and returning to their homes. Others stood about on street corners discussing the tense situation that prevailed earlier.

State Guard Alerted

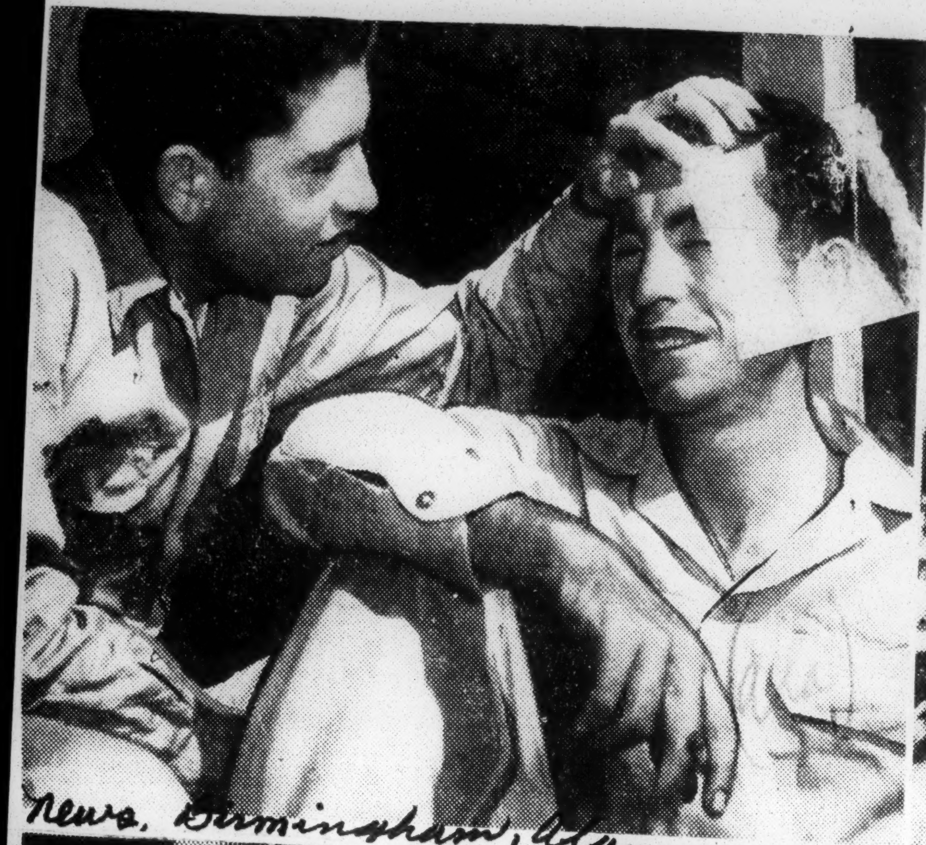
Commanding officers of the Alabama State Guards arrived in the city and alerted the Athens Company I and other companies at Florence, Decatur and Huntsville. The State Guards were never actually called out, however, Mayor Richardson said.

The mayor explained that in an agricultural city like Athens most of the men residents are farmers and come to town to shop Saturdays which accounted for the large number of men downtown at the time.

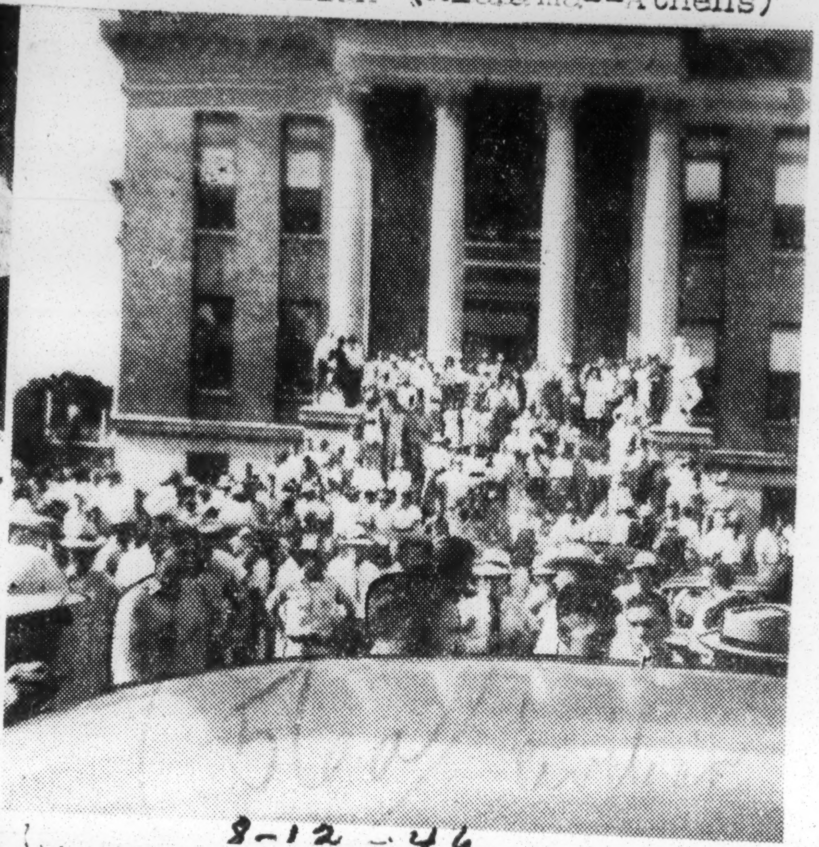
He said the situation here, now was considered "normal" and that a number of Negroes who went about their business in the downtown section today were not molested in the slightest.

56a 1946

Civilian (Alabama--Athens)



News, Birmingham, Ala.



Monday

ATHENS RACIAL DISTURBANCE QUELLED—The "two Massey brothers," Roy, 19 (left), examines the lacerated eye of his older brother, Ben, 23, at their home after the two brothers had been involved in an altercation with two Negroes in Athens, Ala., who touched off a racial disturbance involving a crowd of 500 persons when the brothers were arrested. They were later freed from jail by the mob. In center picture are some of the people on the streets at the height of the disturbance. At the right is the Limestone County Jail where nine men arrested as "ringleaders" in the mob movement, were held. One of those arrested was a 13-year-old boy. Five of the nine had been released on bond today and their trial set for Aug. 26 in Limestone County Court.

Grand Jury Will Study Athen's Mob Disorders

News, Birmingham, Ala.

8-12-46

Negroes In Athens Streets Are Unmolested; Highway Patrol Remains As Safety Measure

BY DANNY DANENBERG
News Staff Writer

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 12—Declaring Saturday afternoon's race riot here, in which a number of Negroes were beaten and others chased from the streets, as a "disgrace to a town that has never had race troubles in more than 150 years," Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnson, Athens, today called a special session of the Grand Jury for next Monday to take action on the case.

Solicitor Johnson said Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr., Decatur, has called for the special session for 9 a.m. next Monday, and he added that Judge Crow will arrive here tomorrow or Wednesday to start forming the jury. Mon.

A veteran of World War II, Solicitor Johnson termed Saturday's riot as a "disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbances. 8-12-46

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County or in any other county in my circuit," Johnson said.

"The Grand Jury will be asked to indict all those connected with this disgraceful affair for riot and rout, which carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the state penitentiary, and I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," Johnson said.

"We must insure that such a disgraceful occurrence that happened in Athens Saturday afternoon never again happens in this county or circuit," the solicitor said.

* * *

COUNTY JUDGE D. L. ROSENAU said all but two of the nine persons arrested had been released on bond today and that bond of the pair being held, James Smith, 17, and Charles Camody, was expected to be made some time during the day. Monday

The county judge added that in the event indictments are returned against any of the nine men arrested he would nol prosse the cases in his court against them in favor of the trials in Circuit Court.

Quick thinking and action on the part of Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., and State Highway Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert was credited here today with quelling a wild racial disturbance Saturday in which at least a dozen Negroes were beaten by a mob estimated at 500 and two white men were freed from the city jail.

Services at most Negro churches here yesterday were cancelled by their pastors to avoid what they said might be "further incidents."

Where Negroes had been "run out of town" Saturday afternoon and night during the mob rioting, a number of Negroes were seen in the downtown section here Sunday and today and walked the streets unmolested. Monday

About half of the 50 state highway patrolmen who arrived here late Saturday afternoon from all sections of North Alabama still remained on duty today as a security measure.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., said the nine persons arrested charged with unlawful assembly would be tried before him Aug. 26. He said the penalty for unlawful assembly ranged up to a maximum of a $500 fine and six months in jail.

Eight of the defendants were identified as Allen LeMay, 17; Fred Todd, 44; James Aycock, 13; E. D Lane, 46; Lewis Robinson, 18; C. T Robinson, 17; George Aycock, 18 and James Smith, 19.

* * *

MAYOR RICHARDSON'S ACTION in releasing Ben Massey, 23, and his brother, Roy, 19, from jail promptly as the mob surged on the city jail and was being held at bay by two officers armed with pistols and tear gas bombs, was held here by city and county officials to have prevented bloodshed at the jail. One shot was fired over the crowd by a policeman as the group sought to obtain release of the two brothers by force.

State Highway Patrol Chief Gilbert, who lives only 10 miles from Athens, near the Tennessee-Alabama line, was highly praised by Mayor Richardson and Sheriff Garrett for promptly rushing 50 highway patrolmen to Athens during the height of the riot. As soon as the officers arrived, Mayor Richardson said, many of the mob began to disburse and return to their homes.

A statewide radio hookup with other offices of the patrol was set up as a means of obtaining reinforcements within a short time, Patrol Chief Gilbert said, but this proved unnecessary. 8-12-46

Nearby cities of Decatur, Florence, Huntsville and other places responded to the call from the mayor by sending a number of their officers here while the highway patrolmen were on the way.

At their homes here today on a rural route about five miles from Athens, Ben Massey, veteran of four years in the Army including 19 months in the Pacific, and his brother, Roy, an Army private, home on furlough, recalled events which led up to gathering of the mob.

* * *

BEN MASSEY SHOWED NEWS reporters cuts on his face and a blackened eye which he said was inflicted by a Negro using brass knuckles. Roy Massey showed a cut on his left hand, which he said he received during an altercation with a Negro, armed with a knife.

"Me and Roy had just come out of a sandwich shop Saturday afternoon when two Negroes bumped into me," said Ben Massey. "I asked one of the Negroes where the hell he thought he was going. He said 'Where the hell you think you are going.'"

"The next thing I knew," Ben continued, "I was struck between the eyes with a pair of brass knuckles. I struck back and knocked the Negro down. Then Roy pitched in as the second Negro started for me with a knife. Roy's hand was bleeding and a policeman started toward us from down the street. Both Negroes began to run and one of them ran into the Negro entrance of the picture show.

"The policemen got us by the arm and hauled us off to jail and we could hear lots of fellows behind us telling the cops to arrest the Negroes too as well as the white men."

Clayborn (Crow) Massey, father of the two brothers, said he saw a crowd gathering in the direction of the jail and started there too when someone stopped him and said, "they've just put your boys in jail after two Negroes jumped on them." Monday

* * *

THE ELDER MASSEY said there was a good-sized crowd at the jail when he got there and he was recognized and shoved through the crowd to the front, where two policemen were standing at the head of the stairs pointing pistols at the crowd.

"About that time, one of the policemen fired a shot but it didn't scare that crowd a bit," Clayborn Massey said. 8-12-46

He said Mayor Richardson told him he could get his two boys and 'take them home' and about that time his sons appeared from the jail. The three of them left the city hall and headed for their home, he said.

Mayor Richardson, who is an insurance agent and serves as mayor part time, said the still restless crowd then surged into the street shouting "Let's run all the Negroes out of town." A number of Negroes who were then on downtown streets were set upon by the mob and beaten and "run out of town," he said.

The mayor said he immediately called Highway Patrol Chief Gilbert and appraised him of the situation. Gilbert in turn, the mayor said, notified the other nearby law enforcement agencies.

Mayor Richardson explained that most of the town's population are farm people and come into town on Saturday to shop. Had the same incident occurred on any other day except Saturday, Mayor Richardson said, "there probably wouldn't have been much to it."

Prompt Action Of Law Officers Draws Praise

News Birmingham Ala.

TUSKEGEE, Ala., Aug. 11—Dr. F. D. Patterson, president of Tuskegee Institute, said here today in a statement to The Associated Press that 'much credit is due for the prompt and efficient action of law enforcement officers and substantial citizens who prevented or held to a minimum unlawful activity which resulted in a more serious outcome." 8-12-46

"Such incidences are particularly to be regretted in view of the growing spirit of tolerance and cooperation between the races in Alabama. Those responsible should be made promptly to feel the full penalty of the law." Mon. 8.12.46

Riot Called 'Not Serious' As Was First Believed

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Aug. 12—State Sen. Charles E. Shaver, of Huntsville, who went to Athens, Ala., Saturday night as personal representative of Gov. Chauncey Sparks to investigate a racial disturbance there reported to Hayse Tucker, state finance director, that "there had not been serious casualties and the situation had not been as serious as was first believed," according to The Associated Press.

Sen. Shaver reported there was considerable "milling around but not actual mob violence," and said that when he arrived soon after the disturbance was reported, "the town was completely under control of law enforcement officers." Mon. 8-12-46

This Morning

Wed. 8/14/46

By JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

The Florida Times Union

"Like sending owls to Athens, as the proverb goes. . . ."

Jacksonville, Florida

Unfortunately, a rather straight line may run from Athens, Tenn., to Athens, Ala., Self-rigthteous young men in Tennessee's Athens used force in a cause so just the whole country applauded, and ignored the dangerous implications.

Last Saturday self-righteous young men in Alabama's Athens used force in a cause so little just that everybody is shocked. Let's hope the same everybody gets the connection. In a community with so small a negro population as the Alabama city's, it was especially wanton that the whole of that population should have been subjected to terror and undiscriminating attack in the name of GIs. Veterans participating in it (and there were) have disgraced the uniform they wore and the fellowship of fighting men to which they belong. Not to say so would be less than loyal to the country they fought for and their fine comrades everywhere. That veteran organizations will be quick to damn them is certain.

President Patterson, of Tuskegee, praised the local authorities at Athens for the way they handled the race riot there. Others, of both races, were equally impressed. When officers of the law and leaders of the community undertake sincere and courageous resistance to mob violence in the South, then indeed it may be said that such violence here is no worse than anywhere else. 8/14/46

The sin of saying you are so right you don't have to obey the law or abide by the rules has multiplied in this land until it has invaded every high place and low.

Unless we mend it Democracy won't work. The Lord may have sent us the events in one Athens after the events in the other to show how self-righteousness that breaks the law can deteriorate. May such wisdom come of this, as lived in that Athens of ancient days and inspired the proverb about sending owls to Athens before one of the same meaning about coals to Newcastle. Wed. 8/14/46

Nothing finer has come from our war veterans since the war than the gathering determination of so many now upon clean government, without regard to party lines or group antagonisms. Only two other things of comparable worth could be undertaken by them beyond their eternal business of looking out for their wounded and the families of their dead. One would be an equally wide determination to put down the politicians and paid professionals who will be thinking up things to demand wantonly in their names. The other would be an aggressive watch against dishonesty in use of things already achieved in their names, such as on-the-job-training, veteran priorities, and unemployment pay.

Six months ago, making the same point and quoting an American Legion resolution of 1930 against "proposals of legislation primarily designed to catch our votes," this column suggested that unless our newspapers and radio commentators were willing to speak out there would be no hope of having the situation understood, since no politician could be expected ever to say anything against veterans or vote down any proposal in their names. It is good to see newspaper and radio commentators beginning to speak frankly on the theme now. H. V. Kaltenborn gave his broadcast to it Friday evening. There have been many editorials, too. But the hope lies with the veterans themselves. And since they are a cross section of this country's finest and best, I believe they need only to look the situation in the face to respond to the peacetime demand as nobly as to the one in war.

A PEOPLE'S VOICE special dispatch from Louis E. Burnham at the scene of the Athens, Alabama race riot said: **"Athens is really an armed camp, despite reports in the daily press that the city is returning to normalcy. Behind what appears to be a calm exterior, with only 25 state highway policemen on duty, in addition to the normal police force, to keep order in the white community of 3,50 persons, the Ku Klux Klan element is still calling for the blood of the Negro ex-servicemen who dared to defend himself against an attack by two white veterans the afternoon of July 10. The Negro community of 1,500 is silently going about its business but they are prepared for any eventuality."** New York

Daily Worker

8-16-46

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9 Arrested in Ala. Riot; Police Still on Alert

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11.—State highway patrolmen and city police patrolled the streets here today as precaution against recurrence of last night's attacks of white mobs against this city's 1,500 Negroes. State Safety Director Van Buren Gilbert, said nine white men had been arrested as members of the mob that marched on the city jail yesterday to demand release of two white men jailed after a fight with two Ngroes. Mon 8-12-46

Gilbert, whose home is here, said no charges had been filed against the prisoners. They were confined in the county jail, he said.

The two white men—the Massey brothers from across Elk River—got into a fight with two Negroes and a policeman arrested them.

He did not twake the two Negroes in, evidently on the assumption that the Masseys were the aggressors, and word quickly spread that the Negroes had not been arrested.

A mob started forming and surging toward city hall. By the time it reached its destination 1,500 to 2,000 men, most of them in their teens, were in it.

One young man leaped upon the City Hall steps and shouted: "Are we going to let the Negroes run us or are we going to run them?"

Men in the front ranks of the mob leaped forward and pulled off the City Hall's screen doors. The police fired one shot across the heads of the mob and shouted that the Masseys had been freed. They had, and had departed hastily for the other side of Elk River.

On the fringes of the mob, men already were chasing Negroes.

The Negroes, and there were thousands of them, had disappeared almost as quickly as the mob had gathered. Some white men went to the Ritz Theatre, where they knew that whites and Negroes, the Negroes in the balcony, were seeing the Saturday night western double feature. Mon 8-12-46

But R. T. Cannon, the theatre manager, had guessed what would happen and had stopped the film and ordered the house cleared.

Only the hasty intervention of 50 state policemen and mobilization of the local State Guard company prevented a bloody race riot.

As it was, 20 or 30 Negroes were "slapped around," by what Gilbert described as 'young squirts." Nine white men and youths, from 44 to 13 years old, were locked up in the county jail, which is surrounded by an electrically-charged fence, on complaints ranging from assault to drunkenness.

By midnight, the town was quiet and state police patrol cars were cruising the streets to keep it so. Today, Gilbert said he thought all danger of trouble had passed.

Guard Alert As Disorder Hits Athens

Montgomery, Ala. Advertiser

Several Negroes Injured Following Fist Battle In Business District

2,000 Men In Mob

10 Ring Leaders Arrested; Restoration Of Order Is Reported Late In Day

8-11-46

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 10—(AP)—A fist fight between two white war veterans and a Negro touched off violence, but short-lived race rioting, today with an undetermined number of Negroes injured, some o. them knocked down by mobs of white men racing through the streets. Sun.

Law enforcement officers, who converged on this North Alabama agricultural center to assist in speedily dispersing the mobs, said a close check of the injured was impossible because the Negroes got out of town or went into seclusion in their homes.

Van B Gilbert, chief of the State Highway Patrol who arrived shortly after the disturbance began, said he estimated 15 to 20 Negroes were hurt, none seriously.

Higher Estimate

Sun.

A higher estimate was made by County Court Judge D. L. Rosenau, who said he believed between 50 and 100 Negroes were injured. He said he saw old and crippled Negroes among many knocked down by white mobs, estimated to have reached a total of 2,000 at one time.

Chief Gilbert reported that 10 ring-leaders had been arrested and placed in the county jail. No charges were filed immediately.

The Highway Patrol chief added that the local company of the State Guard had been dispersed after standing by for possible mobilization orders for several hours. Other guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence had been alerted but Gilbert said the Highway Patrol had things well in hand and the guardsmen would not be needed.

Highway Patrol cars were sent through the Negro district to assure residents there, they would "be taken care of," Gilbert reported.

He said of the 10 men taken into custody, only one was carrying a pistol.

Judge Rosenau said earlier "I expect at least 50 to 100 Negroes were injured. The Negroes were chased off the streets by the mobs."

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he later freed the two white men after members of the mob promised to disperse.

Judge Rosenau said gangs of white men sought to enter several mercantile places in which Negroes were customers but "they were barred by the proprietors who said they would shoot if the gangs came in."

Stores Closed

The stores were later closed.

The judge said approximately 50 Highway Patrolmen were on duty in addition to police officers from other cities in North Alabama "I think the worst is over," Rosenau said, "and if we can get through the night without any more trouble, I think it will be finished."

Guard companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence were alerted for possible use here.

"During the height of the disturbance, bands of 50 to 100 white boys and young men would form in a flash at the sight of a Negro," said B. C. Shelton, publisher of the Decatur, Ala., Daily.

"They would push, shove or strike the Negro—trying to get him out of town," added Shelton, who came from nearby Decatur to help cover the outbreak.

The publisher said that two white men were slightly injured by members of one of the mobs which they attempted to disperse. He added that so far as he learned no one was admitted to a hospital for treatment and only one shot was fired.

"An officer pointed his gun in the direction of a band of white men advancing towards the city jail," Shelton related. "A fellow officer knocked his arm upward and the bullet went into a wall."

The two white men involved in the fist fight that started the trouble were held in the jail for a short time.

Under Control

Adjutant General George L. Cleere, advised here last night that the situation at Athens was under control, said that alerted State Guard Companies at Gadsden, Huntsville and Florence would not be mobilized barring further outbreaks. He added that no Guard company had been given official mobilization orders.

The adjutant general was informed, also, that injuries apparently were confined to those participating in the original disturbance.

State Finance Director Hayse Tucker contacted Gov. Sparks, who is on a fishing trip with Florida's Gov. Caldwell, and was given authority to call out the Guard, if necessary. Mr. Tucker expressed the opinion last night that the emergency had passed. 8-11-46

Grand Jury Studies Riot In Athens, Ala.

Courier Journal

Louisville, Ky.

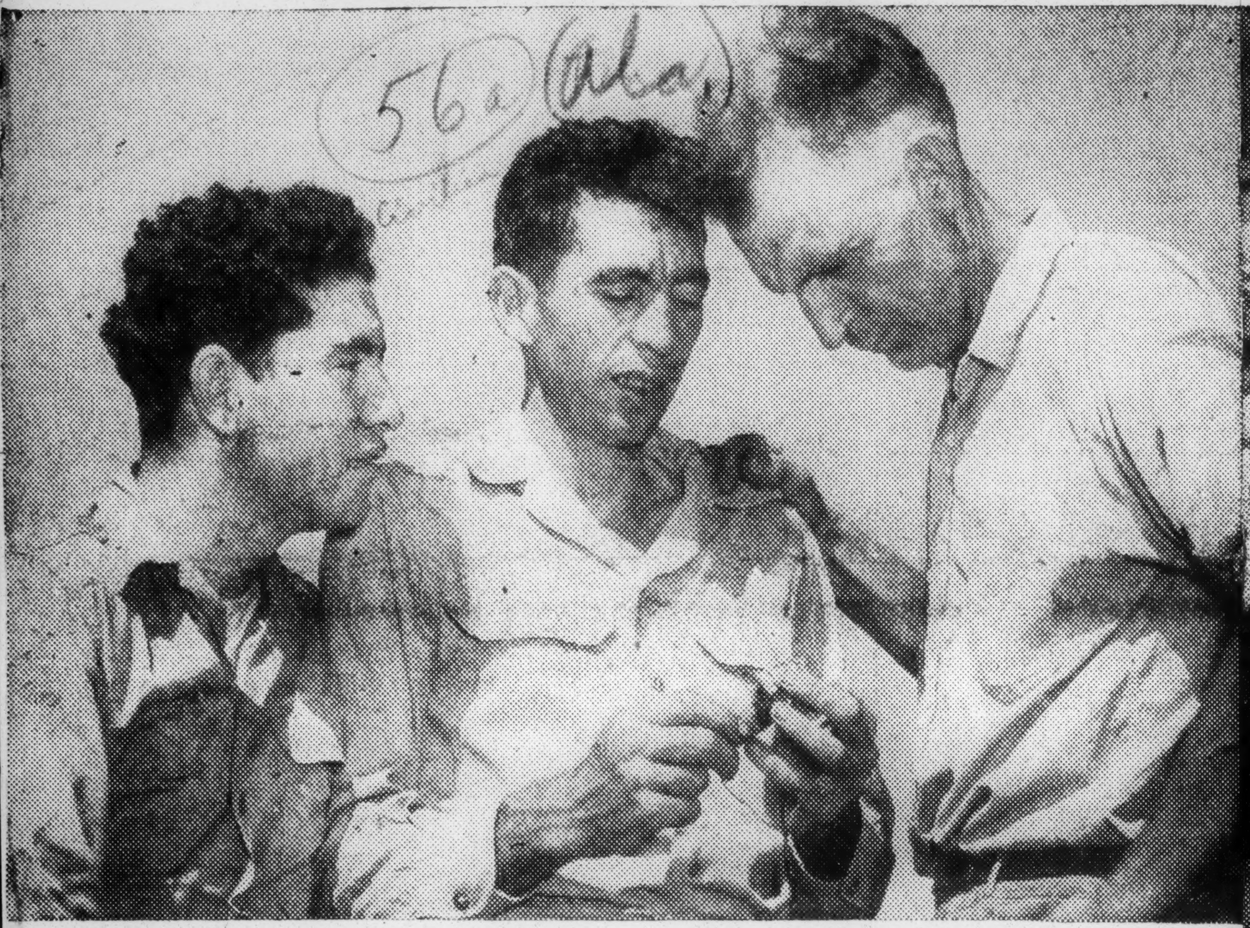
Tue. 8-20-46

Athens, Ala., Aug. 19 (AP)—A Limestone County grand jury heard its first witnesses today as it opened an investigation of the August 10 race riot in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white persons arrested.

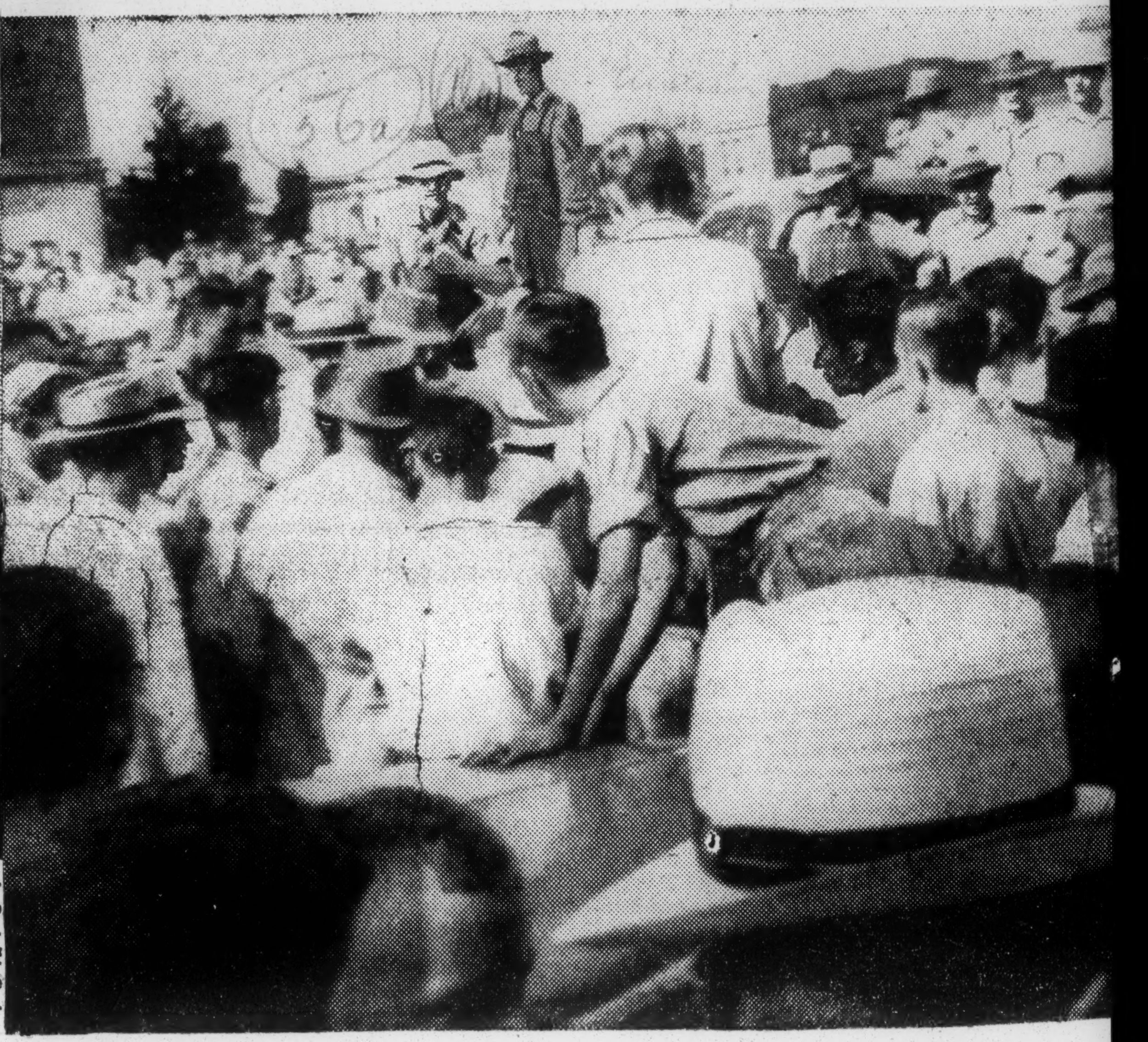
Although the jury is expected to finish its examinations of witnesses tomorrow or Wednesday, the jury will be unable to report because of the absence of Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr.

56a 1946 Civilian (Alabama--Athens)

Mob In Action And Men Who Started It


56a (Ala.)

Civilian


56a

Soldier Roy Massey, 19, left, and his brother Ben, 23, are shown in picture above talking to their father, Claiborne, shortly after the two young men fought with a Negro on the street of Athens, Ala., and then set a howling mob of 2,000 on a rampage to "get" him, trampling upwards of 100 Negroes in the process. Object under inspection is tear gas bomb used to quell iots. They failed in their original purpose. At right the mob, composed mainly of teen-agers, is shown whipping up a fury. Note clenched fist of man in center as crowd begins to move.

Athens Uneasy As Riot Trial Looms

Defender

LATE BULLETIN FLASH!!!

RALEIGH, Miss.—As a result of rising tension between the races, lashed by a series of murders of Negroes, a family known only as the Crafts, was near arrest today after they allegedly wounded four white officers in a shotgun battle. At this moment state patrolmen have trailed the family to a dense swamp near McGee, where they fled following the battle.

Chicago, Ill.

(SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS)

By JOHN F. Le FLORE

ATHENS, Ala. — The fury of the mob which trampled and beat more than 50 helpless Negro men, women and children here last Saturday has been spent, but an undercurrent of tension still pervades this sultry town of 4,500 souls, as county authorities prepare to arraign nine whites who took part in the cowardly pogrom.

The area surrounding the courthouse is like an armed camp as burly state policemen, heavily armed, ominous in appearance, patrol the four-block square. Inside their iron circle is the ground where the mob gathered last week and egged on hate-mongers and Klan elements who stormed the building.

8-24-46

Blinded to all justice, defying law and order, they forced the release of Roy Massey, 19, and his brother, Ben, 23, instigators of the riot. Inside the courthouse, where the mob damage has been repaired, stands the desk where the nine ringleaders arrested Saturday night were booked for unlawful assembly.

Athens' Marion st. still is lined with farmers' vehicles and hucksters' wagons. Loiterers still slouch in the shade of the courthouse, spitting tobacco juice between their feet. Sunburned, denim and khaki-clad men go about their various indolent tasks, and women in calico and gingham finery do their shopping. But the crowd is small, and those few in town are tense and strained, for Athens fears reaping the harvest of the hate seeds it has sown.

Some few citizens rudely awakened from their faith in the status quo, have begun belated efforts to prevent further damage to the social structure of the town. They are trying frantically to keep peace and understanding in a community that has practiced Jim Crow and segregation from its churches to its jails, while bragging of 150 years without racial strife.

[illegible]-24-46

A group of such lately alarmed citizens, Negro and white, met at the office of the town mayor Sunday night to study ways of overcoming the heritage of a century and a half of bigotry and double standards.

Saturday

Klan-supported elements here may have overstepped themselves in their unholy zeal, when they defied all semblances of law and order by forcing the release of two prisoners. Law enforcement officers and frightened citizens alike agree that even "for teaching a nigger a lesson," the mob went too far. Nine of them have been arrested and face prosecution by city and county officials.

Enemies in High Places

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

Frank C. Waldrop, white, writing in Wednesday's Washington Times-Herald, has the following to say about newspaper stories of the race riot at Athens, Ala., in which a mob ran up and down the colored section, took the prisoner away from the police, terrorized and beat every colored person on sight.

"Athens was shamed before the nation as another stop on Tobacco Road—which it certainly is not. Normal Athens is a very pleasant place to live."

Sat. 9-7-46

Waldrop regrets that Athens was shamed before the nation.

Waldrop has a good word to say for Athens. It is a "very pleasant place to live." Like hell it is. Athens is neither a good place for colored people nor for white people.

It is not good for colored people because innocent people can be pushed around, terrorized, beaten by mobs without provocation and punishment to fit the crimes.

It is not a pleasant place for white people "to live" because that kind of defiance of the law and mob brutality coarsens their nature until they are unable to live peaceably with their own consciences.

One enemy of colored people is the Southern "cracker" advocator of poll taxes and lynch law. High above him are guys like Waldrop who apologize for and excuse the terrorism of the South.

Sparks Expresses Regret Over Disorder In Alabama

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala.

Wed. 8-14-46

Expressing regret over recent unruly demonstrations at Athens and Scottsboro, Gov. Chauncey Sparks last night appealed to Alabamians not to forget there are "legal means" for correcting threats against the public welfare.

"If we believe in constitutional government," the Governor said, "attempts by any group to take the law into its own hands cannot be tolerated."

The Governor, just back from a visit with Gov. Millard Caldwell of Florida, said he was pleased with the prompt and efficient manner in which local officials and law officers reacted to prevent more serious bloodshed and possible deaths.

Lawful Means Asked

"If democracy is to survive," he added, "we have got to learn to live peacefully with our neighbors, no matter what their race or creed. There are lawful means of fighting injustices and inequalties and they should be respected."

The Alabama Chief Executive said he hoped there will be no further spread of the "contageous" incidents which have developed over the nation since the end of World War II.

He said he realized there are abnormal situations which exist and which touch upon nearly every home.

"There is no quick or easy solution to the problems which face us," he declared, "but the only safe and satisfactory solution will be a peaceful one."

Grand Jury In Athens Near End Of Inquiry Into Racial Flareup

Birmingham, Ala, News

Aug. 20, 1946

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 20—The Limestone County Grand Jury is expected to conclude its investigation today or tomorrow in the Aug. 10 race riot in which several Negroes were cuffed and beaten and 10 white persons were arrested.

It was considered probable the jury will not be able to report before Thursday because of the absence from Athens of Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr., who left yesterday to attend a meeting in Mobile.

Judge Crow indicated the jurors could adjourn and await his return if they finished their probe before he returned to the bench here.

Meanwhile, a procession of witnesses went before the Grand Jury today.

In charging the Grand Jury yesterday, Judge Crow said:

"In summoning this Grand Jury, I did not do so for the purpose of trying to whitewash any condition that may have existed, but I called the Grand Jury to investigate thoroughly and impartially without showing prejudice or favor to anybody, concerning the true facts and the true conditions that existed in Athens Saturday a week ago.

* * *

"ALL OF YOU, together with the court and authorities, have had occasion to read in the newspapers that certain things happened in this city. It may or may not be true.

"That is what we have called you here to do: To determine to find out, to get to the bottom of the true conditions that existed.

"It is not necessary to look outside the state for laws to protect its citizens. Alabama has those laws that will and can protect each and every citizen in the community."

Frank Turner, Athens insurance man and farmer, was named foreman of the Grand Jury.

Athens Mob Estimated At Hundreds Threatens To 'Chase Negroes Out'

News, Birmingham, Alabama

50 To 100 Injured After Two Veterans Are Arrested Following Fight With Negro Man; Crowd Breaks Into City Hall, Sets Pair Free

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 10—"At least 50 to 100 Negroes were beaten up and "many Negroes in Athens chased out of town" by an angry mob of many hundreds that broke down the city hall door and freed two young white veterans who had been arrested by Athens police after they had engaged in a fight with a Negro man who escaped, Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., reported late Saturday.

Local hospitals reported tonight that no persons had been treated for injuries received in the riot.

Judge Rosenau declared a citywide search for the Negro man was continuing, with many Negroes in Athens being beaten up or chased out of town."

The State Guard was mobilized here late Saturday afternoon and, joined by policemen and other law enforcement officers from parts of North Alabama, they sought to restore order here.

Local theaters, which usually are open until around 11 p.m., closed at 6 p.m. Downtown stores, which usually are open until 9 p.m., closed at 5 p.m. 8-11-46

Some extent of order had been restored late in the afternoon, several hours after the flare of violence was first reported, Judge Rosenau declared, with members of the State Highway Patrol having been called in to help disperse the mob of white youths and men.

At least 25 Negroes were beaten up, Judge Rosenau said, after a member of the crowd had yelled, "Let's clear the streets of Negroes", after an unsuccessful effort had been made to find the Negro being sought in the Ritz Theater here.

The men were freed by Mayor R. H. Richardson after the crowd had broken into the city hall. Sun.

* * *

SHERIFF H. G. GARRETT, of Limestone County, declared that the streets of Athens had been "cleared of Negro inhabitants" and that "two or three" Negroes were kicked or pushed around as the gang spread out from the city hall, where it had demanded and obtained the release of the two veterans who had been held there following the alleged fight.

Athens, which has a population of about 5,000, of whom about a third are Negroes, is identical in name to Athens, Tenn., scene of last week's bloody political battle between veterans and city and county officials.

No death or serious injury to any of the Negroes had been reported late Saturday afternoon, but Judge Rosenau said the streets of Athens were bloody from violence. Every Negro approached by the angry mob was beaten up, the judge asserted.

Judge Rosenau said the incident that touched off the riot was a fist fight between two unidentified former service men and an unidentified Negro about 2 p.m. Saturday.

He said as the two men came out of a building on a downtown street, they brushed against the Negro man, who "knocked one of the men down" and ran away.

"Somebody yelled that the Negro had gone into the show (the Ritz Theater)," Judge Rosenau declared, "and the two veterans tried to get into the theater through the Negro entrance."

* * *

HE SAID THAT ROBERT CANNON, manager of the theater, asked them not to enter the theater until he could notify police. "Policeman J. B. Hargrove came upon the scene and arrested the two white men and carried them to the city hall," Judge Rosenau related. "The mob started collecting in the city hall. At least 2,000 persons gathered in the town square, demanding that the veterans be released," Judge Rosenau said.

Rosenau said that someone in the crowd yelled out, "Let them out and we'll see that the Negro 'gets justice'" and about this time the door of the city hall was broken down and the two men were released.

Members of the mob told police "It won't do any good to get out your guns" as they broke down the city hall door, Judge Rosenau said.

After the two men were freed, according to the judge, a member of the crowd got on a truck and shouted, "Let's get the Negro."

At this time, Judge Rosenau said, Manager Cannon, of the Ritz Theater, telephoned him and asked what to do. He said the crowd was threatening to break into the theater in its search for the Negro. Judge Rosenau advised Cannon to clear the Negro balcony, which he did. 8-11-46

"I went to the theater," Judge Rosenau said, "and the mob was at both the white and Negro entrances. I told the crowd that the manager of the theater was not trying to uphold the Negro or the white man, but was trying to protect his property and the lives of women and children in the theater."

* * *

JUDGE ROSENAU SAID HE told the crowd if it would name six men to go into the theater, he would go with them. He said ringleaders of the gang, one of them being one of the veterans who had been arrested, went with him into the theater.

"They struck matches in the theater in searching for the Negro but they could not see well enough so the showing of the picture was stopped and the lights turned on," Judge Rosenau said.

The mob was assured by its leaders that the Negro was not in the theater, Judge Rosenau said.

"One of the members of the crowd spoke up and said, "'Let's don't let a Negro in the theater again today.'" Judge Rosenau asserted, and then someone else shouted, "'Don't ever let another Negro in the theater.'"

At this point, the judge said, somebody shouted, "'Let's clear the streets of Negroes'" and the crowd started to run wild.

"A number of Negroes were beaten up. They were being beaten up all over town, in the courthouse square and in the outlying districts of Athens," Judge Rosenau declared.

The judge said Police Chief E. L. Evans, Sheriff H. G. Garrett and other law enforcement officers were leading the officers in trying to dispel the violence. He said they all had "guns strapped to their sides" and were patrolling the streets.

Judge Rosenau reported some of the Negroes who were beaten were "cripples." He said several old Negroes" were knocked down by the mob, and added that a Negro man and his wife were prevented from catching a train. "They were chased under a house," he remarked.

* * *

JUDGE ROSENAU SAID HE CONTACTED Clyde C. Sellers, State Highway Patrol chief, after being informed in Montgomery that Gov. Chauncey Sparks was out of town, and that Chief Sellers dispatched between 40 and 50 patrolmen to Athens to help quiet the disturbance.

Van Buren Gilbert, director of the State Highway Patrol, who was en route to North Alabama when Judge Rosenau first contacted Montgomery, arrived at the scene of the riot soon after the call was made and took personal charge of the emergency work of his men.

Mayor R. H. Richardson said late Saturday that he was very much alarmed about the racial violence here, and said he thought the State Guard should be brought here as a precautionary measure," but said he did not believe there would be further trouble.

Athens is located about 105 miles from Birmingham on the Nashville Highway, only a few miles from the Tennessee line.

A large number of out-of-town persons, mostly farmers, were in town Saturday. Sunday

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HELP SEEK ORDER — Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr. (top, above), judge in Limestone County Court; R. H. Richardson (center), mayor of Athens, and Van Buren Gilbert (lower), director, Alabama State Highway Patrol, are figures in the effort being made to restore order in riot-torn Athens, Ala., where an angry mob Saturday attacked "a number of Negroes" and chased others from the streets. Judge Rosenau helped disperse a crowd estimated at hundreds at a theater building; Mayor Richardson effected the release of two veterans who were being detained, and Director Gilbert led between 40 and 50 highway patrolmen seeking to restore order.

Tampa, Fla., Tribune

ALABAMA TOWN IS QUIET AFTER RACE DISORDERS

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11. — (AP) — Guardsmen remained under alert orders today and 50 highway patrolmen policed Athens to prevent repetition of race rioting which drove all Negroes off the streets with some knocked down and beaten.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau reported "all quiet and peaceful." He said he had seen no Negroes around the courthouse where mobs he estimated to total 1800 to 2500 persons yesterday responded to what he termed a mob cry to "clean the streets of Negroes."

Nine white persons, described by Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly." He said eight of the nine were teen-agers, the youngest 13 years old "who carried a club and knocked Negroes down."

Rosenau estimated 50 to 100 Negroes were injured as they were chased from the streets but said none was hurt seriously. He told of seeing "aged Negroes, some women and some children" being knocked down as "the mob, led by a bunch of hoodlums, went temporarily mad."

Athens is a North Alabama farming center of about 6000 persons. About 25 per cent of them are Negroes.

56a 1946

Civilian (Alabama--Athens)

Two Attack Vet: Mob Runs Amuck

Defender Chicago, Ill.

Sat. 8-17-46

By JOHN LeFLORE

(Defender Staff Correspondent)

ATHENS, Ala.—Two youthful white men, who started a howling mob of 2,000 on a race rampage in which 50 helpless Negro men, women and children were trampled and one shot, were arrested and released without charge shortly afterwards last week in this tiny, seething Dixie town.

Meanwhile the customary lip service to law and order was paid by Circuit Court Solicitor George C. Johnson, who declared he "would not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," and called a special session of the Grand Jury for next Monday to investigate the Saturday riot, which at its height led to the local unit of the state guard being alerted.

W. C. Starkey, a white real estate agent, was flogged three times by mob members as he attempted to get them dispersed, suffering head wounds. Nine of the hoodlums were arrested, ranging from 13 to 41 years of age. Eight were released on $300 bond each. The ninth was expected out on $600 bond.

The two instigators, who were released uncharged are Ben Massey, 23, a veteran, and his brother Roy, 19, an army private.

Sammie Griffin and Doc Leslie were among the latest reported injured from the Defender correspondent on the scene.

Identified injured include Bill Sloss, a cripple who was unable to elude the screaming mob, and Terry Griffin. Several other Negroes were run out of town, according to Highway Patrol Inspector Thornton.

The gang of hoodlums, including teen agers and ex-servicemen, loosed its violence on defenseless Negro citizens, following the arrest of two white veterans who attacked a Negro earlier in the day. They went through the streets in forays attacking unfortunate Negroes trapped in the business district of the city.

Injured Avoid Hospitals

So great was the fear of victims that many seriously injured would not go to hospitals for treatment. Many were farmers in town to do their weekly shopping.

The incident which touched off the violence occurred in the early afternoon between two whites, whose names were withheld by police, and L. C. Horton, who was discharged from the army two weeks ago. He was bumped by the whites as they emerged from a restaurant. They attacked him, and he countered by knocking one of them down. As a mob gathered to "protect" the two whites, Horton dashed into a theatre.

When the mob tried to force an entrance the theatre manager called police, who arrested the two ring leaders. Later a mob of 2,000 gathered in front of the jail, demanding release of the troublemakers. Suddenly they rushed the building, overpowered police and freed the pair.

Immediately the mob commandeered a truck and set out to "get the nigger." They stormed the theatre where Horton took refuge, but found that it had been cleared on the advice of County Judge D. L. Rosenau. Finding no Negroes in the theatre the mob vowed to keep them out for good. Swept on by unleashed hatred, they swarmed outside to clear the streets of Negroes, attacking men, women and children indiscriminately.

Defender

At this point Judge Rosenau appealed to state police for aid. Order was restored when 50 troopers arrived, six hours after the outbreak. State patrolmen went through the Negro section known as Mason City, and ordered all stores and shops closed as a precautionary measure. Stores and theatres in the white business section also were closed.

Story "Exaggerated"

Chicago Ill

Sunday, when strained quiet hung over the sultry town, Sheriff H. G. Garrett told a Chicago Defender correspondent that newspapers had exaggerated the trouble.

Sat. 8-17-46

"Two white boys and a nigger had a little fight, and some of the white boys got out of hand. That's all there was to it," he said.

Town Mayor R. H. Richardson stated Saturday that he was alarmed, and thought that the state guard should have been brought in. Later he said that no further trouble was expected.

Athens is an agricultural center, about 15 miles from the Tennessee border, and only 14 miles north of Decatur, where the famous Scottsboro trials were held. Of its 5,000 residents, 1,700 are Negro.

Despite the fact that 50 state policemen were needed to restore order, and that three state guard companies were alerted for duty only a handful of the rioters were arrested. Police said that a few white boys were jailed, but were charged only with public drunkenness. Sunday, Athen's pious Christians went to their segregated churches as usual, confident that the worst is over.

Athens Judge Risks Career, Describes Mob

Defender, Chicago

By JOHN LeFLORE

(Defender Staff Correspondent)

ATHENS, Ala. — Why such few people below the Ohio river dare tell the naked truth on subjects involving the Negro question down South may be realized by what is "shaping up" here.

Irate white leaders in Athens, chagrined over the race riot of Aug. 12, but desiring to keep the real facts suppressed, are out to get the political scalp of County Judge D. L. Rosenau Jr.

Judge Gave True Picture

It was the 44-year-old Judge Rosenau who promptly gave the outside world through newspapers, the magnitude of the mob and the potentialities of its fury.

He estimated that 2,000 white "hoodlums" comprised the mob which first converged on and then stormed the city hall jail to release the two white drunks, Ben and Roy Massey, who instigated the racial flare-up. He also said that about 500 howling hate-crazed whites were in the group which demanded to search the Ritz theatre for a Negro ex-G.I., said to be L. C. Horton, who fought back and knocked down one of the Masseys when attacked by them, and then escaped.

Trample Women Children

Judge Rosenau said that from 50 to 100 Negroes, women, children and cripples, regardless of age or physical condition, were clubbed, beaten with weapons and fists, kicked, jostled, stoned and stomped by the mob moving in forays about town. He admitted that he saw a number of bloody Negro victims.

The judge also asserted that only a lack of sufficient weapons among mob members and a dearth of leadership thwarted possible lynchings. Much lower estimates of the size of the mob and efforts to minimize the extent of its activities have been made by the mayor, chief of police, highway patrol, the sheriff and the governor of the state.

Judge Followed Mob

Judge Rosenau, Yale and Stanford graduate, followed the mob step by step, observing many of its movements of hate, when leaders of the sullen group seemed hell-bent upon entering the Ritz theatre by force to search for Horton, he suggested that they select a committee of five to accompany him into the building for that purpose. The gang could not agree and was satisfied to move elsewhere when their prey could not be found on the premises.

The judge should be in better position to know of the mob's size, the extent of its fury, the number of its victims, and what happened generally, than others in the community who saw little or none of its work of hate. But white leaders who desire to suppress the facts about the situation are determined to achieve Judge Rosenau's defeat two years hence when he comes up for re-election.

Seek Political Revenge

However, despite it all, the judge refuses to be frightened. He reiterated to this Defender correspondent late last Saturday evening just what he first told the outside world through the press a week previous.

Remember the fate of courageous Judge Horton of the Scottsboro trial? He was defeated for re-election because he dared follow his convictions that the defendants were innocent and ruled a mis-trial in the cases. His conscience could not permit him to railroad nine boys to the electric chair merely because they were black.

Politics Back of Athens Riot

The Afro-American

Baltimore, Md.

By VINCENT TUBBS

AFRO Staff Correspondent

at. 8-24-46

ATHENS, Ala.—With speed so markedly uncommon as to cause suspicion, a North Alabama Circuit judge with the distracting name of James H. Crow Jr. has already drawn names of 36 prospective jurors for a special grand jury to investigate a "race riot" which occurred here Aug. 10.

The special hearings were ordered by Judge Crow just 72 hours after the disturbance on recommendation of Circuit Solicitor George Johnson, who stated that he will not tolerate mob violence in this circuit.

Of the 36 Veniremen, 22 are residents of Athens and described as "substantial" men. Hearings which were to begin Monday are expected to last through Wednesday.

Extra Cops Not Needed

Tension and uneasiness gripped Athens Saturday. Business dropped off heavily and the jim-crow balcony section of Ritz Theatre was empty.

The mob had turned out this showhouse Aug. 10 after the release of two Massey brothers from City Hall by the mayor.

Six extra city police and a corps of highway patrolmen were on duty Saturday, Aug. 17, but nothing occurred.

State and Athens, have indirectly hit the hateful incident.

Riot Indictments Sought

Johnson had expressed hope of having the indictments charging riot returned against 11 individuals known to have been among the demonstrators variously estimated at between 500 and 2,000.

These white persons, ranging in ages from 13 to 46, are booked on charges of unlawful assembly punishable by $500 fines and six months imprisonment, whereas the riot charge carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

The Afro-American

Terming the disturbance "a disgrace to a town which for more than 150 years had no race disturbance," the prosecutor says he will push the cases to the limit.

Wrath Inconsistent

This Holy wrath hardly rings true in a State infamous for its anti-colored attitude and in a town just a few miles removed from the scene of the Scottsboro case.

Baltimore, Md.

An intense two-day investigation indicates that the real reason is that the disturbance was more intraracial than interracial.

The initial mob gathering actually stemmed from a fist fight between an ex-soldier, J. C. Horton, and two whites on the street adjacent to the town square.

Held Basically Political

However, subsequent lawlessness, though affecting colored persons, dissolved itself into an unsuccessful effort of so-called "hoodlum elements" to engineer a Putsch akin to election disturbances in the Tennessee town of the same name recently.

This area is currently in a state of unrest traceable to the knowledge of white elements lowest down on social ladder that reversals of government status quo have been successfully effected in a few other towns through mob demonstrations.

Sat. 8-24-46

Vets Take Over at Scottsboro

At 30-mile distant Scottsboro, just 48 hours after trouble here, an insurgent group sprinkled with heavily armed ex-soldiers seized road building equipment and are working on a stretch of highway reportedly long neglected in defiance of officials, two of whom they now seek to impeach.

In this connection, certain facts about the local demonstration in which colored persons seem to have been scapegoats are significant:

No Raid on Homes

Colored persons were not actually "run out of town," they were routed from the town square but the mob made no move to invade residential settlements.

The individual most severely beaten by mob members was an elderly white man and contrary to early reports no colored Athenian can be located who was hurt badly enough to require medical treatment.

Used GI Motive

One colored man who stood almost beneath the mob leader as the demonstration got under way states that the man used the white Massey brothers' Army uniforms as flint to fire the imaginations of mob members.

At the same time, he said that the leader claimed official partiality, inferring that colored people were running the town and there was need for a change in government.

Furthermore, even after the mob succeeded in clearing the square of colored persons and forcing the release of the two white youths, it still hung on and nurtured sporatic internal fist fights.

Later, it is reported, roving bands of mobsters accosted several white businessmen demanding that jobs held by colored workers be given to whites at higher wages.

On the basis of these facts, some local leaders now view the incident as a demonstration by poo white former employees of North Athens cotton mill, aide by irresponsible youths, a few u wise ex-soldiers and rural elemen unaware of the real motives the leaders.

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16 Indicted In Athens Race Disorder

The News and Courier

Charleston, S.C.

Sat. 8-24-46

Athens, Ala., Aug. 23.—(AP): Sixteen persons were indicted today by a special Limestone county grand jury at the conclusion of its investigation of racial disorders here August 10.

Frank P. Turner, jury foreman, said 77 witnesses were heard during the five-day inquiry. He added that testimony "covered all phases" of the disturbance, which followed an altercation between a negro and two white men.

Names and specific charges against those indicted were withheld pending the serving of the warrants. Ten persons were arrested on unlawful assembly charges before the grand jury was convened. County authorities said these charges would be dropped if the grand jury preferred more serious charges.

NEGRO YOUTH CONGRESS OFFICIAL WARNED TO GET OUT OF TOWN AND NOT TRY TO ORGANIZE VETERANS

Black Dispatch

Race Riot Rages in Athens, Alabama, When Two Negro Vets Fight Back at Whites

Oklahoma City, Okla.

MANY WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE HURT

ATHENS, Ala. — (ANP) — Reporting on the riot situation of the city here last Saturday, Louis E. Burnham, organizational secretary of the Southern Negro Youth congress, declared "Athens, Ala., now being discussed by writers for daily press as city returned to normalcy, is really an armed camp" and added that he had been warned to leave Athens immediately. 8-24-44

In making his report, Burnham said, 'Behind a front of 25 state highway police keeping order, is a white community of 3,500 in which klan elements still call for the blood of a Negro ex-serviceman who dared defend himself in a fight with two white vets."

The wave of rioting broke out as a result of a fight involving a Negro and two whites, known as the Massey brothers. The Negro, an employe of the Ritz theatre in front of which the fight started, fought back when shoved by the two whites who also attacked him. He knocked one brother down and made his get-away, before a mob of 2,000 teen-age youths, led by veterans, could catch him.

Reliable reports had it that the police did nothing to stop the mob that formed quickly, but turned the town over to them. Children, women and cripples were beaten indiscriminately. One white man was beaten for trying to defend a cripple friend and neighbor. Injured Negroes dressed their own wounds since there is no hospital for Negroes in Limestone county.

At its heights, the mob rushed through the center of town, demanding that all stores employing Negroes fire them or turn them over to the mob. Burnham also reported that several carloads of mobsters rolled through the Negro community that night, but were fired upon by Negroes who had prepared for the invasion. The mobsters decamped and did not return.

Upon Burham's arrival in Athens, leading Negro citizens were said to have informed him that a state highway patrolman, Van Buren Gilbert, had contacted them saying than an FBI report stated "Louis Burnham of the Negro Youth congress is taking the bus in Birmingham at 12:30 for Athens." 8-24-44

Gilbert is said to have issued a warning to them to "tell Burnham not to try to organize Negro youth especially Negro veterans and to get the hell out of there." Burnham, himself, reported that a highway patrol car picked up and trailed the bus from Decatur to Athens—a distance of about 14 miles, and that he was being shadowed and watched wherever he moved in the town.

ALABAMA TROOPS REMAIN ON ALERT

Times New York, N.Y.

50 Highway Patrolmen Guard Town of Athens After Night of Race Rioting

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 11 (AP)—Guardsmen remained under "alert" orders today and fifty highway patrolmen policed Athens to prevent repetition of race rioting which drove all Negroes off the streets with some knocked down and beaten.

County Judge D. L. Rosenau reported "all quiet and peaceful." He said that he had seen no Negroes around the courthouse where crowds which he estimated to total 1,800 to 2,500 persons yesterday responded to what he termed a mob cry to "clean the streets of Negroes." Mon 8-12-46

Nine white persons, described by Judge Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were in jail on charges of "unlawful assembly." He said eight of the nine were teen-agers, the youngest 13 years old, "who, carried a club and knocked Negroes down."

Judge Rosenau estimated that fifty to one hundred Negroes were injured as they were chased from the streets, but said that none was hurt seriously. He told of seeing "aged Negroes, some women and some children" being knocked down as "the mob, led by a bunch of hoodlums, went temporarily mad."

A more conservative estimate of fifteen to twenty injured was made by State Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert.

Order was restored soon before midnight after the Athens State Guard was mobilized and companies in three near-by towns were alerted. Athens guardsmen spent the night at the armory, ready for any emergency.

Absence of weapons and lack of organization prevented possible lynchings, the judge said. Only one of the many persons searched was found to have a pistol.

Scuffle Leads to Trouble

Judge Rosenau said the riot stemmed from a scuffle between two veterans and a Negro. The white men bumped into the Negro as they came out of a cafe. Words followed and the Negro knocked one of the white men down and fled, Judge Rosenau said.

Police Arrested the Ex-GI's

"Word got around that police had arrested two whites and let the Negro go," the judge related. "The crowd began to grow and by the time they raided the city hall, where the jail is, it numbered 1,800 to 2,500.

"They forced the Mayor (R. H. Richardson Jr.) to let the men out of jail and then a man got up on a truck and made a big speech in which he said 'let's go to the theater and get that Negro.'"

Judge Rosenau explained that the theater was near where the ex-G.I.'s had bumped into the Negro and that someone claimed the Negro was hiding in there. The mob then assembled there but Judge Rosenau had called the management and ordered the balcony, where Negroes sit, cleared immediately. Mon 8-12-46

The judge said he kept the crowd from storming the theater by letting it select six men to verify his statement that no Negroes were inside.

Athens is a North Alabama farming center of about 6,000 persons. Judge Rosenau said about 25 per cent of the residents were Negroes.

The judge said the nine men arrested would be arraigned before him Aug. 26. He said there were "thirty or forty other ringleaders" but did not know whether they could be identified.

He stated that W. C. Starkey, a real estate man, tried to get the crowd to disperse but "was slugged three times by some mobsters." Mr. Starkey suffered slight head wounds.

Judge Rosenau said that in addition to extra policemen here next Saturday the town would be prepared to "turn the fire hose on any mob—nobody with wet clothes wants to lynch anybody."

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16 INDICTED IN RACE RIOT

Times New York, N.Y.

Alabamans Accused in Beating of Score of Negroes Aug. 10

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Aug. 23—Ten indictments against sixteen persons were returned today by a Limestone County grand jury upon completion of its special hearing on the Athens (Ala.) race riot of Aug. 10, when a score of Negroes were beaten. Sat. 8.24.46

Withholding names and specific charges until warrants are served, Solicitor George C. Johnson would say only that the sixteen men were charged with "commission of crimes."

Grand Jury Will Probe Athens Riot

Times Dispatch

Richmond, Va.

Tues. 8-13-46

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 12—(AP)—A special session of the grand jury next Monday was ordered today to investigate Saturday's race riot and Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnston said he would press for immediate trial of any indicted by the jury.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," the solicitor said in a statement. He described the rioting in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten or trampled as "a disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

Indictments charging riot and rout, carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the State penitentiary, will be asked, Johnston said, on "all those connected with this disgraceful affair . . ."

"I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," he added.

Nine Are Bonded

Meanwhile, nine persons described by County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were released on bond. Ranging in age from 13 to 41, they were charged with unlawful assembly, and one faced an additional count of carrying a concealed weapon. Bond was fixed at $300 on each count.

Maximum penalty for conviction of unlawful assembly is a $500 fine and six months in jail. Judge Rosenau said he would nolle prosse the lesser charges in favor of those carrying heavier penalties in the event the grand jury indicts any of the nine. They are scheduled to be arranged before Rosenau August 26.

Rosenau estimated that between 50 and 100 Negroes were beaten by mobs of white men he said totaled more than 2,000 at the height of the disturbance. A more conservative estimate was made by State highway patrol director, Van Buren Gilbert, who placed the injured at 15 or 20 and the mob as about 500.

The riot was touched off in midafternoon by a fight between a former veteran and his GI brother and a Negro on an Athens street jammed with the usual Saturday afternoon farmer shopping crowd. Rosenau said

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Hope Even In Athens

Tues. 8-13-46

To say that the Athens race riot might have been worse than it was is small comfort. No one was seriously hurt, although a dozen or more Negroes were beaten and several white men are nursing cuts and bruises. Quick work on the part of the city's officials and the coming of armed police forces from the outside helped considerably in quelling what might easily have become as serious an affair as the one in Columbia, Tenn., last Spring. News-Birmingham, Ala.

Like most potential riots, this one had its start in a personal altercation between white men and a Negro. Whichever party was to blame is less important than what happened afterward. The fight ended when officers arrived and placed the white men under arrest; the Negro escaped and has not yet been apprehended. That event in itself should have remained only a minor breach of the peace which the local police force could most certainly have handled without difficulty. But the familiar pattern of Negro-white animosity made itself manifest and a mob formed with the avowed purpose of releasing the white participants and of finding and punishing the Negro who had dared to strike a white man. Then the crowd turned its temper on all colored people, regardless of their lack of participation in the initiating episode. The civil rights of Negroes were once again violated; they were driven from the streets, some were assaulted, and the whole colored community was humiliated. Tues. 8-13-46

One of the distressing circumstances revealed by the unhappy event was the fact that young boys participated. A lad of 13 was arrested along with eight other ringleaders of the mob estimated at more than 500 persons. There is scant hope for restoring good race relations in a community if children lend themselves to the creation of ill-will and the perpetration of violence.

While the whole affair can only be called disgraceful, there were several items that lead one to hope for the future. Numbers of white men endeavored to persuade the crowds to disperse, showing clearly that they were aware of the evil implications and of the wrongs that might ensue. They kept their heads and refused to join in the mob spirit, even endangering their own positions in the community in their desire to restrain the hotheads from vicious action. And a Negro man made his way through the crowd and offered to give himself up to be held as a hostage until his brother could be found. When men of both colors exhibit such courage and common sense, there is still much hope for the betterment of relations between the races.

Seven White Men Are Arrested, Nine Sought In Athens Riot Case

The News

Birmingham, Ala.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 24—(AP)—Seven white men were arrested here today and nine other persons were sought on indictments returned by a special Grand Jury which investigated the Aug. 10 race riot.

All of those arrested were charged with unlawful assembly, a misdemeanor, and were released on $500 bond in each indictment. Two of those arrested were indicted on two counts.

Sheriff H. J. Garrett said he expected to complete the serving of the warrants over the week-end.

He listed those under arrest as follows:

H. S. Todd, two counts; Lewis Robinson, two counts; John Morgan, Roy Hargrove, Elam Cox, Archie Lauderdale and Elam Hamilton. Sun. 8.25.46

The Aug. 10 riot followed an altercation between a Negro and two white men. Crowds gathered in the streets and Negroes were beaten and chased. Several were slightly injured, but none required hospitalization.

A special Grand Jury was impaneled and began taking testimony Monday following Circuit Judge James Crow's charge to the members that the body was not called to whitewash the outbreak. Testimony was heard from 77 witnesses before the jury made its final report and was discharged yesterday.

56a 1946

Civilian (Alabama--Athens--Trial)

16 Whites Indicted In Athens, Alabama Riots

Amsterdam News New York, N.Y.

Sat. 9-7-46

ATHENS, Ala., (Special) — Sixteen white persons have been indicted by a special Grand Jury here, following the race riot of August 10, in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and injured.

Of the men named in the indictments, 11 have been arrested and the others remained to be taken into custody. Sheriff H. G. Garrett has stated that warrants will probably be served on them over the week end.

All of the rioters who have been apprehended have been charged with the "offenses" either of unlawful assembly or preventing peaceable exercise of business.

The riot occurred following an altercation between two Limestone County brothers, white, and a Negro. The names of the men have not yet been revealed, nor have the names of most of the men arrested. Two of the latter, who are in jail in lieu of payment of bail, are Thomas Sexton and Charles Comody, Jr.

A total of 77 eye-witnesses to the mob violence have been questioned by Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr.; who has stated that the trials will be held during the regular Circuit Court session, which is scheduled to open in late October.

Estimates as to the number of persons taking part in the riot vary from 500 to 2,000, with grand jury foreman Frank P. Turner stating that the "actual number involved was only a small percent of the original number reported."

A report appearing in the Herald Tribune stated that four persons had been lynched during the rioting, but up until the present time has not been made authentic. Officials of the National office of the NAACP report that they have been checking the report, and have as yet not received any facts concerning it.

Athens Race Riot Trials Postponed

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala.

ATHENS, ALA., Oct. 21 —(AP) — Trials stemming from indictment returned in connection with the Aug. 10 race riot here have been tentatively passed to the Spring term of circuit court in March, Sheriff H. G. Garrett reported today. Tues. 10-22-46

They were originally scheduled for this week, but were passed on the docket by Judge A. A. Griffith.

Sheriff Garrett said the postponement was occasioned by a farm labor shortage in this district, and a desire upon the part of the court not to hamper farmers by summoning a venire.

Fifteen white men were arrested on the indictments, all of which charged misdemeanors, and each is at liberty under $5000 bond.

A sixteenth man was indicted but Sheriff Garrett said he had left the State and had never been apprehended.

Sheriff Garrett said the trials might be called during a Winter

Johnson City, Tenn. Chronicle
Aug. 19, 1946

Jury Is Impaneled To Probe Race Riot

By BEM PRICE

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 17. (AP) —An 18-man special jury will be impaneled Monday by Circuit Judge James Crowe, Jr., to investigate the race riot here in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white men arrested for "unlawful assembly."

The jury will be drawn from a venire of 36 men, all of whom are listed as farmers. Circuit Court Clerk John Kaufman said 22 of the men lived in Athens and described them as "substantial men." Limestone County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., said the hearings probably would last through Wednesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the uneasiness which has been reflected in street conversations throughout the week was apparent in the number of people who came into town today.

Judge Rosenau said merchants had told him that business today dropped off considerably and Robert N. Cannon, manager of the Ritz Theater, said attendance was off considerably. He added that the section reserved for colored people was virtually empty.

As a precaution against a similar outbreak today, state safety director Van B. Gilbert and a dozen state patrolmen from Decatur and Huntsville moved into town early in the morning. In addition Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said six extra policemen has been hired by the city and had already reported for work.

The riot was touched off following an altercation between an unidentified Negro and two brothers, Roy and Ben Massey. The Massey brothers were arrested and carried off to the jail by police officer J. B. Hargrove. A crowd gathered in front of the jail and demanded the brothers be released. The screen door to the jail was broken down and the mob advanced up the stairs.

Frank Johnson, night city policeman, fired the only shot of the day over the heads of the surging men. The Masseys were released without charge but about that time an ex-serviceman climbed to the top of a bread truck and demanded that the town be searched for a Negro who had struck the Massey brothers.

In a few minutes, according to Judge Rosenau, someone suggested that the streets be cleared of Negroes. In the ensuing melee an undetermined number of Negroes were "chased, kicked or beaten." None however showed for hospitalization. At least one participant in the trouble has apologized publicly. Thursday the Limestone Democrat, local newspaper, carried a portrait of H. S. Todd, and the statement that Todd has asked the following be printed:

"I want to apologize for the part I played in the unnecessary disturbance Saturday. It is with shame that I face you people. I have learned my lesson and I apologize to everyone."

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16 Indicted For Alabama Race Rioting

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 24.—(AP)— Sixteen persons—their names and the charges against them undisclosed as yet—are under indictment as a result of the Aug. 10 race riot in which Negroes were kicked and beaten by a mob of white men.

Solicitor George C. Johnson said the names and the accusations will not be made public until after the warrants are served.

The rioting was touched off by a street fight between two young white men and a Negro.

Frank P. Turner, grand jury foreman, said the jurors found "the number involved (in the rioting) was only a small per cent of the original number reported."

One estimate placed the number of participants at 2,000, others at between 400 and 500.

The jury questioned 77 witnesses and its five-day inquiry "covered all phases" of the riot, Turner reported.

State highway police, in dispersing the rioters, arrested nine white persons on charges of unlawful assembly. None of them has been tried, and county authorities said the charges will not be pressed if the grand jury indicted them for more serious offenses.

Judge James H. Crow, Jr., said those indicted will be docketed for trial at a court session opening Oct. 24.

Special Jury Impaneled For Riot Hearing

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala.

Sun. 8-18-46

Merchants Report Drop In Business; Citizen Makes Apology

By BEM PRICE

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 17.—(AP) —An 18-man special jury will be impaneled Monday by Circuit Judge James Crowe, Jr., to investigate the race riot here in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white men arrested for "unlawful assembly."

The jury will be drawn from a venire of 36 men, all of whom are listed as farmers. Circuit Court Clerk John Kaufman said 22 of the men lived in Athens and described them as "substantial men." Limestone County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., said the hearings probably would last through Wednesday afternoon.

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In a few minutes, according to Judge Rosenau, someone suggested that the streets be cleared of Negroes. In the ensuing melee an undetermined number of Negroes were "chased, kicked or beaten." None however showed for hospitalization. At least one participant in the trouble has apologized publicly. Thursday the Limestone Democrat, local newspaper, carried a portrait of H. S. Todd, and the statement that Todd has asked the following be printed: Sun. 8-18-46

"I want to apologize for the part I played in the unnecessary disturbance Saturday. It is with shame that I face you people. I have learned my lesson and I apologize to everyone."

The Democrat also carried a full column and a half on page one devoted to comment on the affair by out of town newspapers and a list or resolution by local civic clubs deploring the outbreak. One of their resolutions, signed by the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions, Rotary, and Progress, said "any further attempts to instigate similar action will be dealt with promptly and severely and every effort will be made to clear the name of our city from an act brought on and executed by a small group of mobsters."

Athens ~~Race Riot~~ Trials Postponed

ATHENS, Ala., Oct. 22—(AP)— Trials stemming from indictments returned in connection with the Aug. 10 race riot here have been tentatively passed to the spring term of circuit court in March, Sheriff H. G. Garrett reported today.

They were originally scheduled for this week, but were passed on the docket by Judge A. A. Griffith.

Sheriff Garrett said the postponement was occasioned by a farm labor shortage in this district, and a desire upon the part of the court not to hamper farmers by summoning a venire.

Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
Aug. 21, 1946

Finding The Facts

The duty of a grand jury in Alabama is to ascertain facts on matters of public concern. Usually, the facts relate to criminal conduct, but the grand jury is empowered to investigate any unhealthy condition in the body politic. That is the duty of the grand jury which was organized Monday at Athens, Ala., to look into a recent racial disturbance in that city. It is, of course, a highly important duty.

The first obligation of this grand jury is not to whitewash Athens and its people. Although the good name of the city may have been damaged by some of the sensational reports of the incident, the blemish will not be removed except by a thorough probe and by stern action if that is in order. Justice, impartially and firmly administered, is the only course in the premises.

Justice, it seems, is the positive aim of the circuit court judge and solicitor, judging by their statements when the grand jury was organized. This is as it should be.

First Witnesses Heard

Charlotte, N. C. Observer
Aug. 20, 1946

Probe Of Race Riot In Alabama Opened

BY BEM PRICE.

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 19.—(AP)—A Limestone county grand jury heard its first witnesses today as it opened a probe into the August 10 race riots in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white persons arrested.

Though the jury is expected to finish its examinations of witnesses tomorrow or Wednesday, the jury will be unable to report because of the absence of Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr.

Judge Crow said he was leaving Decatur today to attend a meeting in Mobile and would not return before Thursday. Asked what would happen in event the jury was ready to report, Judge Crow said, "I guess they'll just have to adjourn until I return."

JUDGE'S CHARGE.

In his charge to the jury, Judge Crow said:

"In summoning this grand jury I did not do so for the purpose of trying to whitewash any condition that may have existed, but I called the grand jury to investigate thoroughly and impartially without showing prejudice or favor to anybody concerning the true facts and the true conditions that existed in Athens Saturday a week ago.

"All of you, together with the court and authorities, have had occasion to read in the newspapers that certain things happened in this city. It may or may not be true.

"That is what we have called you here to do: to determine to find out, to get to the bottom of the true conditions that existed."

The judge, who was elected to the circuit court in the May primary, also observed:

"It is not necessary to look outside of the state of Alabama for laws to protect its citizens. Alabama has those laws that will and can protect each and every citizen in the community."

Formation of the jury came just a week after Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnson, who is a candidate for Congress to succeed Rep. John Sparkman, nominated to the Senate, declared he would "not tolerate mob rule."

Frank Turner, substantial Athens insurance man and farmer, was named foreman of the investigating body.

FIGHT STARTED RIOT.

The riot followed an altercation between two brothers, Ben Massey, 23, and Roy, 19, and a Negro. The Negro fled and the Massey brothers were arrested.

A mob formed to secure the release of the Massey brothers and both were freed by Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr. The crowd began to disperse, but as they moved out, an ex-serviceman exhorted the crowd "to find the Negro."

Someone else yelled, "Let's run the Negroes out of town," and for the next two hours the crowd ran rampant through the town, beating and kicking Negroes. None of the Negroes, however, reported for hospitalization.

The mob originally was estimated by County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., as around 1,800.

Athens is a city of approximately 5,000 population and is the trading center for farmers in extreme north central Alabama.

Limestone Jurors Hear Witnesses On Race Riot

Montgomery Ala
Advertiser

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 20.—(AP)—A Limestone County Special Grand Jury heard a new procession of witnesses today in its investigation of the Aug 10 race riot in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white persons were arrested on unlawful assembly charges.

This Tennessee Valley community was quiet as the inquiry, begun yesterday, continued.

The riot developed following an altercation between two white men and a Negro. 8-21-46

Negroes were driven from the town, but State Highway Patrolmen were summoned and quickly restored order. No injured persons required hospitalization.

The jury report is expected Thursday, when Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr., will return from a brief trip. wed.

Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
Aug. 21, 1946

MORE WITNESSES HEARD ON RIOTING

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 20—(AP)—A Limestone County special Grand Jury heard a new procession of witnesses today in its investigation of the Aug. 10 race riot in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten and 10 white persons were arrested on unlawful assembly charges.

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Jury Probes Athens Riot Next Week

Advertiser
Montgomery Ala.
Tues 8-13-46

Solicitor Will Press For Immediate Trial All Those Indicted

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 12.—(AP)—A special session of the grand jury next Monday was ordered today to investigate Saturday's race riot and Circuit Solicitor George C. Johnston said he would press for immediate trial of any indicted by the jury.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," the solicitor said in a statement. He described the rioting in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten or trampled as "a disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

Indictments charging riot and rout, carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment in the State Penitentiary, will be asked, Johnston said, on "all those connected with this disgraceful affair."

"I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," he added.

Meanwhile, nine persons described by County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were released on bond. Ranging in age from 13 to 41, they were charged with unlawful assembly, and one faced an additional count of carrying a concealed weapon. Bond was fixed at $300 on each count.

Maximum penalty for conviction of unlawful assembly is a $500 fine and six months in jail. Judge Rosenau said he would nol prosse the lesser charges in favor of those carrying heavier penalties in the event the grand jury indicts any of the nine. They are scheduled to be arraigned before Rosenau Aug. 26. Tues 8-13-46

Rosenau estimated that between 50 and 100 Negroes were beaten by mobs of white men he said totaled more than 2,000 at the height of the disturbance. A more conservative estimate made by State Highway Patrol Director Van Buren Gilbert, who placed the injured at 15 or 20 and the mob as about 500.

The riot was touched off in midafternoon by a fight between a former veteran and his GI brother and a Negro on an Athens Street jammed with the usual Saturday afternoon farmer shopping crowd Rosenau said

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Police Hold 13-Yr.-Old In Athens Disturbance

The Call
Kansas City, Mo.

ATHENS, Ala.—(ANP) — One of the nine white males being held here on charges of mob action against local Negro citizens Friday is 13 years old.

According to County Judge D. L. Rosenau, he "carried a club and knocked Negroes down." **Eight of the nine prisoners, described by Rosenau as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," are 'teen agers.**

The judge estimated 50 to 100 Negroes received minor injuries by a mob that included between 1,800 to 2,500 whites, but State Patrol Chief Van Buren Gilbert estimated the mob at 500 and the injured at 20. The rioting was started by a scuffle between two white men, one an army private, and a Negro veteran.

Fifty highway patrolmen were policing this northern Alabama farming center of 6,000 persons, of which 25 per cent are Negroes, early Monday while guardsmen **still remained under "alert" orders** to maintain law and order.

Charges of "unlawful assembly" will be lodged against the nine mob prisoners, Judge Rosenau said. First reports of the rioting said Negroes were hunted down by the mob in protest of police action in arresting two white men who were involved in altercations with Negroes. In both instances the Negroes were not arrested, reports said. 8-23-46

White mobsters were reported to have visited the jim crow balcony of a local white theater for Negro patrons. Eyewitness accounts reported that "old Negroes" were knocked down on the streets and a Negro couple was chased under a house. 8-23-46

Declaring "I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone county," George C. Jonhston, Circuit Solicitor, last Monday called a special session of the grand jury to investigate race rioting of August 10 in which an undetermined number of colored persons were beaten. Friday

The solicitor said the disturbance was "a disgrace to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

"The grand jury will be asked to indict all those connected with this disgraceful affair for riot and rout, which carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment in the state penitentiary," Mr. Johnson said. "I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit.

"We must insure that such a disgraceful occurrence that happened in Athens Saturday afternoon never again happens in this county or circuit.

The disturbance flared in midafternoon following a fight between an ex-GI and a colored man, all colored people subsequently were driven from the streets by mobs of white men estimated by County Judge D. L. Rosenau Jr. to total around 2,000. The judge said "nine hoodlum leaders of the mob," ranging in age from 13 to 41, were arrested on charges of unlawful assembly.

Mayor R. H. Richardson Jr. said the veteran, Ben Massey, 23 and his brother, Roy, 19, an Army private, were taken into custody but that he later released them without any charges, in an effort to get the mob to disperse. The colored man in the fight escaped.

An investigation of the rioting has been started and all evidence will be presented to the grand jury, he added. Call 8-23-46

The mayor said services at most colored churches in Athens on Sunday, August 11, were cancelled by their pastor to avoid what they said might be "further incidents." Kansas City Mo.

ATHENS ARMED CAMP

Reporting on the riot situation of the **city here** last Saturday, Louis E. Burnham, organizational secretary of the Southern Negro Youth congress, declared: "Athens, Ala., now being discussed by writers for daily press as city returned to normalcy, is really an armed camp" and added that he had been warned to leave Athens immediately.

In making his report, Burnham said, "Behind a front of 25 state highway police keeping order, is a white community of 3,500 in which klan elements still call for the blood of a Negro ex-serviceman who dared defend himself in a fight with two white vets."

The wave of rioting broke out as a result of a fight involving a Negro and two whites, known as the Massey brothers. The Negro, an employe of the Ritz theatre in front of which the fight started, fought back when shoved by the two whites who also attacked him. He knocked one brother down and made his get-away before a mob of 2,000 teen-age youths, led by veterans, could catch him.

Reliable reports had it that the police did nothing to stop the mob that formed quickly, but turned the town over to them. Children, women and cripples were beaten indiscriminately. One white man was beaten for trying to defend a crippled friend and neighbor. Injured Negroes dressed their own wounds since there is no hospital for Negroes in Limestone county.

At its height, the mob rushed through the center of town, demanding that all stores employing Negroes fire them or turn them over to the mob. Burnham also reported that several carloads of mobsters rolled through the Negro community that night, but were fired upon by Negroes who had prepared for the invasion. The mobsters decamped and did not return.

Upon Burnham's arrival in Athens, leading Negro citizens were said to have informed him that a state highway patrolman, Van Buren Gilbert, had contacted them saying that an FBI report stated "Louis Burnham of the Negro Youth congress is taking the bus in Birmingham at 12:30 for Athens." 8-23-44

Gilbert is said to have issued a warning to them to "tell Burnham not to try to organize Negro youth, especially Negro veterans and to get the hell out of there." Burnham, himself, reported that a highway patrol car picked up and trailed the bus from Decatur to Athens—a distance of about 14 miles—and that he was being shadowed and watched wherever he moved in the town.

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16 Indicted In Racial Disturbances

Times-Dispatch
Richmond, Va.
Sat. 8-24-46

ATHENS, ALA., Aug. 23—(AP)—Sixteen persons were indicted today by a special Limestone County grand jury at the conclusion of its investigation of racial disorders here August 10.

Frank P. Turner, jury foreman, said 77 witnesses were heard during the five-day inquiry. He added that testimony "covered all phases" of the disturbance, which followed an altercation between a Negro and two white men.

Names and specific charges against those indicted were withheld pending the serving of warrants. Ten persons were arrested on unlawful assembly charges before the grand jury was convened. County authorities said these charges would be dropped if the grand jury preferred more serious charges.

56a 1946

Civilian (California)

What "really happened" in Manual Arts race riot told

The Tribune

Los Angeles, Calif.

Details of the recent racial disturbance at Manual Arts high school were given by Chief Reed, of the Los Angeles police, and Mr. Honn, of the public schools, before this month's meeting of the executive committee, Los Angeles County Committee on Human Relations, at City Hall.

Reed said the trouble originated at a malt shop across the street from the school, where a white boy called a Negro boy a "nigger" and a fight ensued. Whites, outnumbering the Negroes, won, Reed said, but the next day Negro boys from the southern part of the city returned in large numbers and beat up the whites.

Sat. 8-31-46

The third day, a large number of boys assembled from as far as El Monte, he continued, but many officers were present so the fight was blocked. A smaller conflict broke out later in the week but police were again able to prevent it from becoming serious.

About 35 boys, 20 Negro and 15 white, ages 15 and 16, were taken to juvenile court, where they were released to their parents. Six Negroes and two whites were booked for having weapons.

Police are keeping order on S. Vermont ave., Reed said, but he added, police activities are only a stop-gap. He said authorities needed the help of community organizations, especially in Watts, Lincoln Heights, the valley, and the east side.

Honn said the relationship between the six per cent Negro students and the remainder of Manual's body was good, and that no Manual students were involved in the disturbances. Twenty-five per cent of the Summer school enrollment is Negro.

The discussion that followed disclosed that the athletic and musical talents of minority group students are valued by schools; Negro mothers attend PTA meetings and social teas, but do not speak much at the meetings; before the outbreak some coordinating council members had noticed trouble developing, but nothing was done about it; and there has been racial friction at the Shrine skating rink and Exposition park swimming stadium. It was also charged that malt shops in many communities become meeting places for gangs where it is reported marijuana is sold.

There is an antagonistic white group south of Exposition park which is determined to keep Negroes out of the community through restrictive covenants, it was stated. These adults may have communicated their attitudes to their children, it was pointed out.

The next public meeting of the committee has been set for Sept. 16, room 501, Hall of Records.

Authorities Guard Against Calif. Riot

Daily World

Atlanta, Ga.

Thurs. 9-19-46

LOS ANGELES — (A N P — A terrified 13-year-old boy was under a physician's care last week and sections of the city of Venice still threatened with open race-warefare as police made multiple arrests to quell juvenile and adult rioting.

Police who openly admit that young white hoodlums provoked the disturbance Saturday night, stated late Wednesday that things were still in a state of confusion, and the outbreaks were possibly not over.

The two most seriously injured Negroes were Clifton Alexander, 13 kidnaped by four white men and youths and one white woman, and Oscar Wallace, 35, with a possible fracture of the skull.

ORIGINAL START

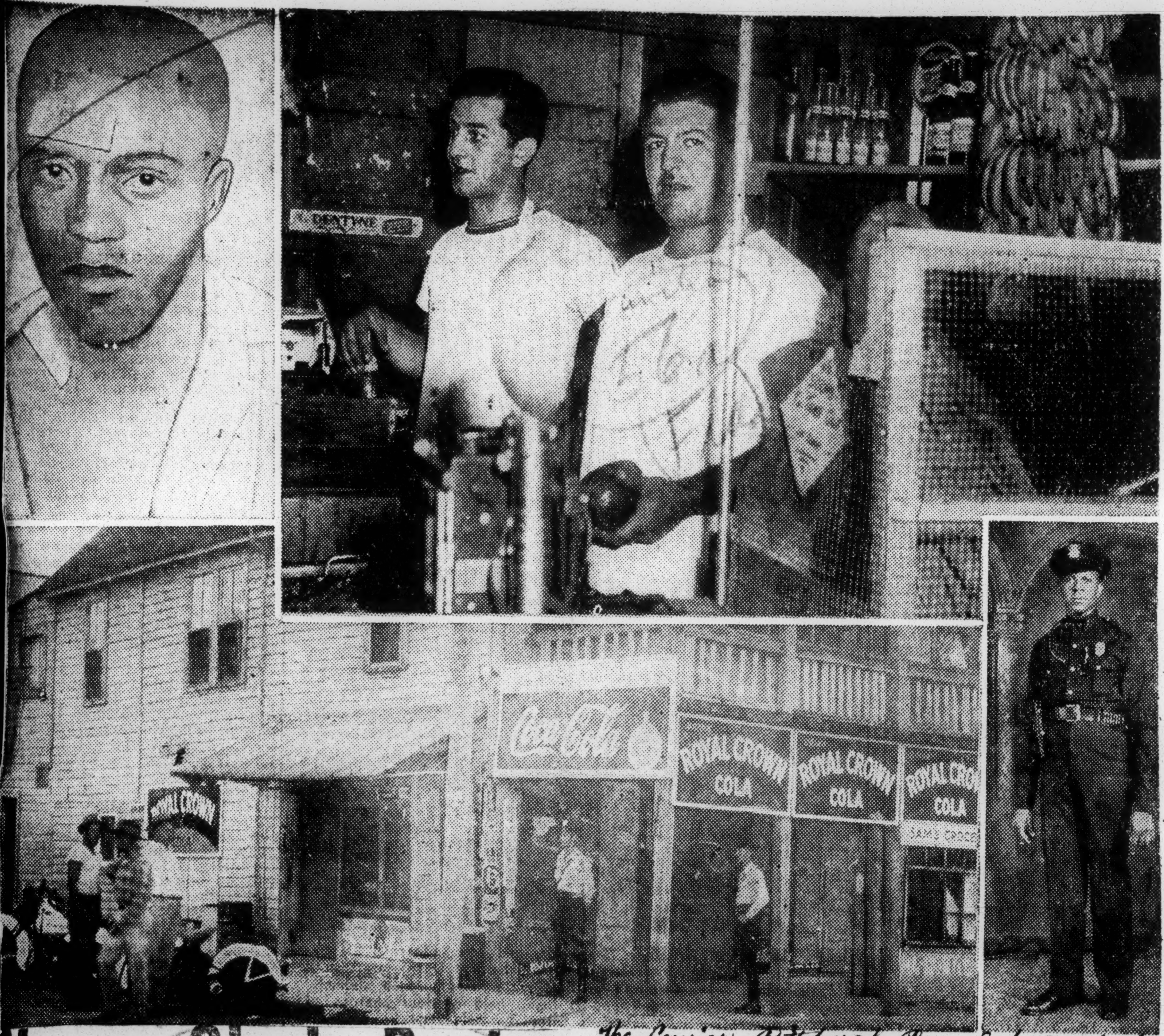
Detective Lt. M. A. Stephenson stated that it appeared the rioting was originally started when a gang of white youths accosted several young Negro boys and taunted them, calling them vile names. After several exchanges in which more youths gathered, young Alexander was kidnapped, displayed in the car by this quintet of whites, who yelled:

"We got a n--- r we are going to kill him."

He told police that they beat him and threatened his life while driving about Venice for 15 to 20 minutes, and he was finally thrown from the moving car at Wesminister and Washington boulevards.

This action led to sporadic outbreaks in which several whites and Negroes were injured, and police riot squads called to prevent further spread of the trouble. Officers arrested six or eight whites, mostly juveniles. Among those arrested were Richard N. Sheppard, 19 and James Parmalee, 18.

Wallace was allegedly injured when he attempted to rescue several small colored boys, and he was slugged over the head with a club, requiring seven or eight stitches in emergency treatment.



The Courier Pittsburgh, Pa. Sat. 9-21-46

PRINCIPALS IN MIAMI DISTURBANCE—These pictures show principals and store involved in the naer-riot in Miami, Fla., last week. Sixteen policemen broke up a crowd of nearly four hundred that ganged the the store after the two proprietors beat their employe, a war veteran. Upper left: Smith DeArmond, who was beaten by his employers, Roger and Nicholas Misleh. Upper right: The brothers who attacked DeArmond. Left to right: Roger and Nicholas Misleh. The brothers were charged with assault and battery. Lower left: The store is now closed because of an effective boycott. Lower right: Policeman Jacob J. Frinks, Miami police officer, who controlled the crowd and prevented a riot. Fifteen other policemen arrived on the scene later.—Courier Photos by John Diaz.

Negro Clerk Beaten Severely By Whites

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

Thurs. 9-19-46

MIAMI, Florida — (SNS) — FLASH! Negroes in vicinity of Northwest Second Avenue and Eighth st., were angered to breaking point Wednesday night over an incident that occurred in Sams Grocery. Smith Arrmond, Negro clerk, was mobbed and severely beaten about the face by two sons of the owner when he allegedly was caught stealing cigarettes.

The younger of the two brothers refused at first to talk with two reporters but finally admitted he had summoned his brother from home when he found what he took to be cigarettes Smith had hidden still in the store.

The brother arrived and orderd Smith in the rear of the store and demanded his apron. He stated that a butcher knife fell to the floor from it and he struck him about the face several times while he called for help infecting several gashes.

Then while the two held him policemen were summoned. Smith ran when police arrived. He stated further that "They" had promised Smith a beating. Police carried the men away from an angry gathering and some remained as the last de-all left.

Bottles and bricks burst out all the windows in the store. Police arrived and ordered all persons off streets. This isn't the first similar disturbance at this corner. More details later

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ANGRY MOB BOYCOTTS STORE IN MIAMI, FLA.

Pittsburgh, Pa. The Courier Sat. 9-21-46

B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N

MIAMI, Fla.—The store where Smith C. DeArmond was beaten here last Wednesday by two employers was reopened Monday morning after three days of effective boycotting, during which no one entered. Pickets were still on the job Monday and rejected the appeals of the father of the white assaulters of the former GI to quit the picket line and let him run the business.

By JOHN A. DIAZ
Miami Correspondent

(Picture on Page 4)

MIAMI, Fla.—Sixteen colored and white city policemen broke up a threatening crowd of 400 here last Wednesday after the angry group gathered in front of a store, where a Negro employe had been beaten by his two white employers. Since that time the store has remained closed because of an effective boycott.

As policemen began to disperse the crowds, two rocks were hurled through the front windows of the store. A shot was fired into the air shortly before the officers arrived.

The two white men, Nicholas Misleh, 29, and Roger Misleh, 24, brothers, admitted beating Smith C. DeArmond, 24, a former GI. They were arrested and each released under bond of $25 after having been booked on disorderly conduct charges. Later they were charged with assault and battery and ordered to stand trial in Criminal Court, according to Assistant County Solicitor John C. Wynn.

TREATED AT HOSPITAL

DeArmond, who had been in the employ of the brothers just three weeks, was released on the weekend from Jackson Memorial Hospital where he was treated for injuries.

Motives for the beating differed. The brothers said they beat their employe because he stole four cartons of cigarettes from the store. DeArmond denied stealing the cigarettes, declaring that the men attacked him after he criticized them for being "too familiar" with colored women who traded at the store. Sat. 9-21-46

People living near the store are determined that the store will remain closed and that the storekeepers will be forced to go out of business because of the attack made on the war veteran.

BOYCOTT EFFECTIVE

A riot call brought the sixteen policemen to the scene of the disturbance. A colored officer, Patrolman Jacob J. Frinks, escorted the bloody and beaten DeArmond from the store. The victim disappeared into the crowd and was not found until the next day. Courier

No persons have been in the store since last Thursday. Two people entered the grocery the day after the disturbance, but were trounced upon by angry citizens and warned against patronizing the Misleh brothers. Pittsburgh, Pa.

Conduct of all of the officers during the flareup was admirable.

Walter White

The Defender, Chicago, Ill.

Margin For Race Riot

MORE OFTEN than not, the margin between a race riot and no race riot is the intelligence of the policeman on the beat. The greatest economy society might practice would be payment of high enough salaries and the raising of the standards of officers of the law to attract higher type men and women. If we were callous enough to ignore the lives lost and the physical injuries suffered in the Detroit and Harlem riots of 1943, think of the several million dollars of destroyed property which might not have been destroyed, particularly in Detroit, had there been wiser handling of the situation by the police.

These reflections arise from a thrilling story just heard about what might have been a nasty riot in Richmond, Calif., which in turn might have set off other explosions along the West Coast. No riot occurred because two policemen in a prowl car had that most uncommon of attributes, common sense. Noting a crowd angrily pouring into a store they drove over to see what the trouble was. The teen-age son of the proprietor formed the core of an excited crowd which was lapping up the child's story of how a gang of Negroes had savagely beat him up. There was plenty of evidence to back up his story. The lad's clothes were torn to shreds. Blood streamed from numerous cuts and bruises. Face and hands were smeared with red.

Army Crowd Grown

Sat. 7-20-46

BY NOW the angry crowd had grown to around one hundred and fifty men who were shouting that they should march down to colored town to "teach the niggers a lesson." The situation was all the more explosive because the neighborhood was populated almost entirely by white Southerners who had migrated to Richmond to work in the Kaiser shipyards. Immediate action was imperative to prevent a serious outbreak. Somehow the weeping boy's story seemed to the two policemen a bit too glib. Quieting the incipient mob they concentrated on the boy who became increasingly nervous and evasive. At last the story was wormed out of the boy. He and seven of his schoolmates had concocted a plan to tear their clothes, cut themselves and, to elicit more sympathy, smear themselves with mercurochrome and then tell lurid stories of being beaten by Negroes. The idea had been hatched after a fight between a white and colored boy when the latter had hit a white girl in the eye with a paper dart. The colored boy had cut his opponent with a switchblade knife.

But already the false story had swept like wildfire throughout the neighborhood. The policemen sensed that unless something were done to nail the lie, such were the latent racial and job tensions in the area, serious trouble could still break out. They hastily summoned all the mothers, white and colored, and made the boy and his co-conspirators confess. Tension died aborning. Fury which might have cost lives, injuries, property damage and lasting prejudice against Negroes was turned into condemnation of the white boy who had almost caused a race riot.

Two Similar Incidents

THIS INCIDENT, unhappily rare, brings to mind two somewhat similar episodes in New York. A few days ago a Hearst tabloid screamed the story of a middle-aged white woman who claimed that she had been seized by two Negroes on Fifth ave. near the 86th st. entrance to Central Park, bound, gagged, held and raped for 20 hours and then released. The experienced New York police were skeptical. Investigation revealed that the woman was a bail-skipper on a larceny charge from a western state. Physical examination showed she had had no sexual intercourse for several months.

Not long ago another such episode was featured on the front pages of even the most sedate of New York papers. Another white woman told the police that a party had been given her in a Yorkville restaurant to celebrate simultaneously her birthday and her induction the following morning into the Army as a nurse. She walked home with a friend after the party, she declared, and then went to a store on her way home to buy cigarettes. Leaving the store two burly Negroes (don't skinny Negroes ever commit crimes?) robbed her, hit her in the face and kicked her in the stomach.

Here is what was revealed. There had been no party at either the restaurant where the woman claimed she had been the guest or anywhere else in Yorkville. She was no nurse, Army or any other sort. She was not to be inducted into the Army the next day or any other day. She had spent the evening in bar after bar along Lexington ave. with the man (white) with whom she was at the time living, the latest in a long line of such gentlemen. Her past life had included 11 convictions for vagrancy, theft and prostitution. One part of her story was, however, proved to be true—she had been beaten and kicked in the abdomen. But the kicker had been her current "boy friend" who had resented her insistence that he pay back $200 she had loaned him.

Are Race Disorders Epidemic?

The Star of Zion Charlotte, N.C.
Thurs. 8-8-46

The recent riot at Athens, Alabama, while admittedly handled in a measure with promptness by local officials, calls attention to the fact that such disorders, together with a number of murders, some by law enforcement officers, form a pattern, which, to say the least, is becoming more alarming each day. Negro GIs in many widely separated areas of the nation have been assaulted, murdered and otherwise abused by officers of the law, with such reckless abandon that Negro citizens everywhere are restless and worried over a constantly increasingly serious state of affairs.

It was well-known by many observers that Negro veterans would be sensitive and easily provoked by discrimination and abuse by citizens and officers of the law, and it was hoped that such disorders might be avoided by tolerance and understanding, such as ought to be in evidence in connection with men who have been under great nervous strain as a result of the long months and years of service in overseas duty in the Armed Forces. But it seems that officials, far from showing the necessary tolerance, have been all too quick to shoot to kill whenever these men have run afoul of the law and have been involved in any sort of disturbances of the peace.

Officials of various communities have been sensitive and resentful of comment upon these affairs, seeming to assume that each is an isolated case, and should be regarded as such. But the fact remains that riots and killings, in which Negroes are the victims are happening so fast and in such numbers as to leave the impression that they are becoming epidemic throughout the country, and the fear is that they will increase in numbers and frequency unless stern measures are taken to prevent them even before they occur.

Cilvil authorities should have taken warning, and certainly they have sufficient knowledge of the dangers now to put them on their guard. Unless this is done speedily and with precision other and more serious disorders are likely to occur.

Race Riots Caused By Fools, Rascals Says Quaker Expert

The Defender Chicago, Ill
Sat. 7-27-46

LOS ANGELES—"It takes a fool or a rascal to get a riot going," said G. James Fleming, secretary on race relations for the American Friends Service Committee, while visiting here last week.

"It takes a fool," he said, "because he doesn't understand, or a rascal because he plans it for an ulterior motive."

While in the city Fleming consulted with Mayor Fletcher Bowron on immediate and long-term causes of race riots. Tension has arisen in Los Angeles with the city's growth to third largest in the country and its Negro popplation risen to 200,000.

At Detroit Riots

The Quaker conducted an on-the-spot investigation into the 1943 Detroit riots and witnessed the Harlem riots of 1935. He was associated with the Mayor's Committee on Conditions in Harlem.

"The climate in which race rioting spreads," explained Fleming, "is one in which there are groups of people who do not trust the police, who believe that they are being discriminated against in employment because of race, religion, or color or where these groups are denied opportunity to improve their housing because of restrictive covenants or 'gentlemen's' agreements."

Fleming stopped here on his tour of West Coast cities to make a study, guiding race relations work of the Friends' Committee. Previously he visited Seattle and San Francisco.

"The majority of people speak in glowing terms of Los Angeles and the state of California," Fleming advised the mayor, despite the shortage of housing and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.

"This pride in the city is a reservoir of good will which a city can build upon," Fleming declared, "once it will use both imagination and courage in meeting its new problems."

The mayor, Fleming stated, recognized the lack of housing, the shortage of all facilities and the ease with which the overcrowdedness can be misused to arouse tension and conflict among the racial, nationality and religious groups in the city.

Sparks Tells Negro Critic Race Riots Not All South's Fault

News Birmingham Alabama
8-15-46

MONTGOMERY, Ala., Aug. 15—(AP)—Gov. Chauncey Sparks, replying to a telegraphed critique on the Athens, Ala., race riot from the publisher of a Negro paper in Chicago, asserted that quick action by state authorities had reduced the violence to a minimum.

"Before you or your publication condemn the people of Alabama," the governor advised the publisher, "you should look into the facts and ascertain that the incident at Athens has been rather grievously magnified. It is a poor springboard for your propaganda."

The publisher, John H. Sengstacke, of The Chicago Defender, wired the state chief executive that the Athens incident was part of a "veritable reign of terror" existing in the South.

"A whole segment of our population is being terrorized," the Chicagoan said, and added that "since judicial processes appear to be paralyzed or stymied, some Negroes . . . may decide to protect themselves by taking the law into their own hands."

He said the world "now knows about Columbia, Tenn., Monroe, Ga., and Athens, Ala.," and asked the governor "to take immediate action."

Thursday

Sparks, wiring a reply a few hours after receiving the Sengstacke telegram yesterday, said he was sure the world "knows of Detroit as well as Columbia, Monroe and Athens." Several persons were killed in a race riot in Detroit several years ago.

8-15-46

"No segment of our population is being terrorized," asserted Sparks, "and so far as Alabama is concerned, every segment of our population is under adequate protection of the law and peace officers. . . .

"If you will study the quick action of the Highway Patrol of Alabama at Athens, you will understand how this situation was seized upon early and violence reduced to its minimum."

Sengstacke told the governor that Negroes, living under the "lash of fear and the terror of mob rule," are becoming "increasingly restive."

Sparks' message asserted that "with cooperation rather than hostile criticism, those of us of both races down South who are trying to live together in peace and justice could do a better job."

The South alone, he said, cannot accept full responsibility for racial outbreaks.

Birmingham, Ala., News
Aug. 15, 1946

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56a 1946

Civilian (Kentucky)

Ky. State College Town Scene of Racial Flareup

Argus
St. Louis, Missouri

FRANKFORT, Ky., May 1 — (ANP)—This section, scene of bloody violence between races in the river bottom district known as "The Craw" last week, seems to be settling down.

Disturbances began when Bixio Fallis, a city freshman, claimed a Negro pushed his wife off the sidewalk. He was hit with a a shovel and James Owens, a Kentucky State college student, was charged with disorderly conduct in connection with the incident.

Fri 5-3-46

Police Chief Guy Wainscott said he did not know how many were injured in the clashes. Bars and liquor stores were closed by Mayor Arthur C. Jones.

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2 Riots at Fort Knox as Result of Rumor

The Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.

FORT KNOX, Ky.—Two riots between colored and white American Army prisoners, have taken place here inside the stockade during recent months after a white prisoner spread a rumor that he had been threatened by one of the colored.

Afro American

White prisoners, outnumbering the colored 10 to 1, successfully cornered the others into one barrack, and then stoned them through windows and doors. No one was hurt. Riot squads were called in both instances.

Sat. 8-11-45

56a 1946 Civilian (New York)

2 SHOT, 3 ARRESTED IN RACIAL FRACAS

'Little Gangie' Davidoff Held After Negroes Are Wounded in Brooklyn Street

A shooting affray in which two persons were wounded grew out of a fight between whites and Negroes in the East New York section of Brooklyn Saturday night and led to the arraignment yesterday of three men with police records on a charge of felonius assault. The trio was held without bail for a hearing in Brooklyn Felony Court tomorrow.

The prisoners, were William Davidson, 41 years old, of 400 New Lots Avenue; Sam Goldberg, 32, of 66 Powell Street, and Russell Roccaforte, 23, of 103 Glenmore Avenue, all of Brooklyn. Davidson, alias "Little Gangie" Davidoff, brother of the late Al (Bummy) Davis, murdered boxer, has been arrested twenty-four times since 1923.

The fracas that preceded the shooting began at 8:30 P. M., when several white men were routed in a fight with Negroes. Half an hour later an automobile stopped at Livonia Avenue and Christopher Street, where the fight had taken place, and three white men, with pistols drawn, left the car and entered the Bombay Cafe.

In a few minutes the whites left, accompanied by a Negro, and shots were fired outside the cafe. Hit in the chest were James Daniels, 35, of 361 Livonia Avenue, and Raymond Barnes, 8, of 128 Thatford Avenue, both Negroes. They were taken to Kings County Hospital, where their condition was described as not serious. Both were bystanders and not involved in the argument, according to the police.

Patrolman Leon G. Jampol, first policeman on the scene, saw a man dart into a hallway. Caught, the man identified himself as Davidson and said he was fleeing from Negroes who had just robbed him of money and a wrist watch. The policeman was skeptical and took him to the Liberty Avenue police station. Already there were Goldberg and Roccaforte, who had been picked up in a parked car near the scene of the shooting.

56a 1946

Waynesboro, Ga., Citizen
October 4, 1946

Civilian (Pennsylvania)

RACES RIOT, BUT NOT IN GEORGIA

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 29—

A 32-year-lod Negro was held without bail on a homicide charge Sunday following a riot in North Philadelphia in which a white man was killed and scores injured

Magistrate Benjamin W Schwartz ordered Thomas Lockhartheld for coroner's action following a Police Court hearing. He also ordered 10 others held in $300 bail as material witnesses.

Harry Ulmer, 32, died in the Wild-swinging melee between whites and Negroes Saturday night Homicide detectives said other men and boys suffered black eyes and cuts and that a score of windows were shattered on Hope Street, occupied largely by Negroes.

They reported baseball bats were used as weapons during the riot, which was broken up by a riot squad of city policemen.

Police authorities said they could not determine the exact cause of the outbreak.

Two versions of the start of th melee were given to policemen.

Detective Lt. Bart Gorman said residnets of Hope Street told him Ulmer, his brother and two others attempted to "commit a nuisance" at the home of Doctor Parrish, 50, a Negro.

The detective said he was informed that when Parrish asked the men to leave, they made slurring remarks and that Parrish and several other Negroes left the house. The melee followed.

Another version was given detectives by Martin Ulmer, 20-year-old brother of the dead man. He was reported as saying one of the four, identified only as "Chuck," became involved in an argument after the four men left a taproom at which they had been drinking.

PHILADELPHIA RIOT

ENDS IN ONE DEATH

The Times New York, N.Y.

White Man Loses Life, Negro Is Held After 100 Battle With Clubs, Bricks in Streets

Mon. 9-30-46

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 29—A man was killed and an undetermined number of persons injured late last night in a riot in North Philadelphia.

The melee lasted about ten minutes and at one time more than 100 Negro and white participants battled in the streets with clubs, bricks and milk bottles. Several squads of policemen halted the battle and arrested eleven persons, including four women.

The dead man was Harry Ulmer, 32, white. Detectives said his skull was crushed.

Thomas Lockhart, 32, Negro was charged with homicide in connection with the killing and held without bail for coroner's action.

Man conflicting stories were told about the battle, but Thomas Powers, detective, said at a hearing before Magistrate Benjamin W. Schwartz that the fight in which Ulmer was killed was the second melee, involving Ulmer, his brother, Martin, 20, and a group of companions within an hour.

The major clash began, according to Detective Powers, after the Ulmers and their companions left a taproom and one of the men attempted to cause a nuisance at the home of Doctor Parish, Negro. Residents of the house asked the men to leave. An argument began and the fighting followed.

Detective Powers said that passersby aided the Ulmers and their companions while householders in the neighborhood rushed from their homes to meet them. He said that Lockhart was in possession of a baseball bat during the height of the battle and it flew from his hands during the struggle. Detectives said that it was possible the bat struck Ulmer when it flew from Lockhart's grasp, but according to Mr. Powers, they have found no one who actually saw Lockhart strike Ulmer.

The cause of the clash was not immediately determined. Thirty men and boys were taken to a precinct police station for investigation.

The melee lasted about 10 minutes. A squad of 25 police fought for 5 minutes before succeeding in restoring order.

One Man Killed In Philadelphia Negro-White Fight

The Courier Journal
Louisville, Ky.

Sun. 9-29-46

Philadelphia, Sept. 28 (AP)—One man was killed and an undetermined number cut and bruised tonight in what police said was a clash between white and Negro persons in north Philadelphia.

The dead man was identified by police as Harry Ulmer, 32, Philadelphia. Police reported he was hit on the head with a baseball bat.

WHITE ATTACKER KILLED IN RAID ON PHILA. NEGROES

The Worker New York, N.Y.

Sun. 10-6-46

PHILADELPHIA. — A Klan-like attack on a Negro community resulted in the death of one white attacker and a near race riot last Saturday night. It was immediately answered by a move for Negro-white unity by the Communist Party and other groups, and a demand that Mayor Bernard Samuel act immediately to root out the Klan-inspired gangsters.

Steps were also under way to free Thomas Lockart, 32-year-old Negro teamster, of 2206 N. Hope St. whom the police arrested after the death of one of the white attackers, Harry Ulmer, 32, of 2502 East Sergeant St. None others, Negro and white, were released on bail as material witnesses.

An investigation by The Worker indicated there was no evidence against Lockart. Newspaper stories that the dead man had been struck by a flying baseball bat were repudiated by Negro neighbors. Detectives admitted, off the record, that the dead men showed no signs of physical injury.

White residents in the Front and Susquehana Ave. neighborhood agreed with the Negro people in Hope Street that relations had always been friendly, and that the gangsters had invaded the area from Tulip, Sergeant, and Westmoreland streets. One young white mother, daughter of the corner candy-store proprietor, said:

"We all went to school together. There has never been any trouble. The girls in Hope street are old friends of mine."

Here is the story told us by Sarah Johns, Mr. Lockart's niece, and her neighbor, Doctor Parish's niece, of 2202 Hope Street:

"Doctor Parish, a 50-year old laborer at Budd's, was sitting in front of the house about half-past nine. 'Tis two nieces came in and said that a group of four white men had urinated down our cellar-window. Doctor Parish walked away. The white men jumped him and started to beat him.

"They are the same group who have been coming through here before, calling us bad names, and breaking milk bottles. But we ignored them, and there was never any fight before.

"Other neighbors came out into the street to help Doctor Parish. Mr. Lockhart was just an onlocker, But other members of the gang rushed up from around the corner, and hit Mr. Lockhart and tored off his shirt.

"There was a big crowd until the police came and broke it up. There were some scratched and bruises, but we didn't know anybody had been hurt badly, until the police came back. They saw Mr. Lockhart without a shirt, and maybe that's why they arrested him.

"Later that night, some white people came back, and threw a gasoline-soaked rag into a window, and also tried to start fire in another house. But the neighbors put the fires out.

"We've lived here for years, never any trouble with the white people in the neighborhood. It's those young fellows from down around Tulip street. The police ought to stop them."

Meanwhile, an investigation was under way into the fatal shooting of an alleged "thug," 23-year-old Morris Jenkins, of 32nd near Haverford, by Patrolman Robert Frazier. Jenkins is the third man the policeman has shot since he joined the force six years ago.

Man Held for Homicide In Philadelphia Race Riot

The Courier-Journal Louisville, Ky.

Mon. 9-30-46

Philadelphia, Sept. 29 (AP)—A 32-year-old Negro was held without bail on a homicide charge today after a riot in North Philadelphia in which a white man was killed and scores of persons were injured.

Magistrate Benjamin W. Schwartz ordered Thomas Lockhart of Philadelphia held for coroner's action after a Police Court hearing. He also ordered 10 others held on $300 bail as material witnesses.

Harry Ulmer, 32, died in the wild-swinging melee between whites and Negroes last night. Homicide detectives said other men and boys suffered black eyes and cuts and that a score of windows were shattered on Hope Street, occupied largely by Negroes.

They reported baseball bats were used as weapons during the riot, which was broken up by a squad of City policemen.

Lockhart told the magistrate he struck three men with a baseball bat and that he then threw away the weapon and continued the fight with his fists. He did not mention Ulmer.

An autopsy was ordered in Ulmer's death. Police authorities said they were unable to learn whether the man died of injuries or of a heart attack caused by the excitement. He was dead when he arrived at Episcopal Hospital where physicians reported there was a "bump" on his head.

Two versions of the start of the melee were given to policemen.

Detective Lt. Bart Gorman said residents of Hope Street told him Ulmer, his brother and two others attempted to "commit a nuisance" at the home of Doctor Parrish, 50, a Negro.

The detective said he was informed that when Parrish asked the men to leave, they made slurring remarks and that Parrish and several other Negroes left the house. The melee followed

Another version was given detectives by Martin Ulmer, 20-year-old brother of the dead man. He was reported as saying one of the four, identified only as "Chuck," became involved in an argument after the four men left a taproom at which they had been drinking.

Philadelphia Tense

Man Killed in Riot; 9 Persons Arrested

The Courier Pittsburgh, Pa.

Sat. 10-5-46

By JACK SAUNDERS

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—Mounting tension between Negroes and whites erupted here last Saturday night when a race riot broke out in the Front and Dauphin Streets section and a white man was killed, several men and women were arrested by armed police ordered to the scene.

The riot started shortly before midnight Saturday, and continued through Sunday morning. Every known weapon with the exception of firearms were used by the clashing groups, and it was a baseball bat which bashed open the head of the slain man, Harry Ulmer, 32, white, of 2512 East Sargeant Street.

NINE ARRESTED

Arrival of the police sent most of the rioters scurrying in various directions, but officers arrested nine men and women, including a man charged with homicide, before they could break through the cordon thrown around the area. Fearing a new uprising, extra police details were sent to the scene in red cars and patrol wagons.

All through Sunday the district was crawling with officers in plainclothes and in uniform.

Held on a charge of homicide

in the death of the white man was Thomas Lockheart, 32, North Hope Street near Dauphin. He was arraigned before Magistrate Schwartz and held to await the action of the coroner. Also arrested were four Negro women, two Negro men, and three white men.

The women gave their names as Pauline Perkins, 19; Sarah Johnson, 19; Marie Lyons, 26, and Helen Shannon, 24, all residents of the North Hope Street block, in which the trouble started.

WHITES IN SECOND MELEE

The men arrested were Dr. Parrish, 50, and Howard Carlton, 19.

The white men under arrest are Charles Meyer, 19, of Tulip Street near Norris, and James Cassidy, 21, of East Dauphin Street, near Gual, friends of the slain man.

Detective Thomas Powers disclosed that the fight in which Ulmer was killed was the second melee in which the victim and his brother, Martin Ulmer, were involved with Negroes. The earlier fracas, according to Powers, involved the Ulmers and two companions and was touched off when a Negro resident of the 2200 block of North Hope Street objected to the conduct of one of the men as they passed through the street.

The four fled, but returned a short time later with reinforcements, Powers said. Their arrival touched off the spark which fired the neighborhood into an area of pitched battles. Lined up on one side were Negro residents and on the other, the white invaders. Bricks, milk bottles and any weapon at hand filled the air as the two groups clashed. The Courier

Detective Powers said that Lockheart, armed with a baseball bat, was flailing away when the bludgeon flew from his hand. It is possible, police say, that the missle struck Ulmer while it was flying through the air. To back up that contention, Detective Powers said that detectives found none who actually saw Lockheart strike the fatal blow. Pittsburgh, Pa.

Ulmer was pronounced dead on arrival at Episcopal Hospital and subsequently police started rounding up rioters and all suspicious characters in the section. For twelve hours police allowed only residents of the area to enter the section. Sat. 10-5-46

Race Riot Rumors False Say Philadelphia Police

Defender Chicago, Ill.

Sat. 10-5-46

By ORRIN EVANS

(Defender Staff Correspondent)

PHILADELPHIA — Police insisted this week that the street brawl here Saturday night between whites and Negroes in which one man died was not a race riot as had been broadcast over the nation and labeled by the daily press.

Capt. Andrew McDermott of the Fourth and York police station in whose district the violence occurred said the brawl was only a minor flare-up.

Nevertheless, Thomas Lockhart, 32-year-old Negro, 2206 N. Hope st., was arrested Sunday and charged with wielding a bat which is alleged to have killed the white victim.

"As long as I have been in this district we've never had any racial trouble," Capt. McDermott declared. "The whites and Negroes live side by side in absolute harmony."

almost simultaneously with scores police: Defender

Ulmer and two men were observed by a Negro Doc Parrish, committing a nuisance against the property of his next door neighbor.

When Parrish protested against such action, the three were reported to have cursed Parrish. A fight between Parrish and the three men followed. Sat.

Negro residents on Hope street were attracted to the scene and Ulmer and his companions fled. Late Ulmer returned with more white men who began throwing stones at several Negro homes in the area. Chicago, Ill.

For approximately 15 minutes, Negroes and whites were engaged in a bitter brawl at Hope and Susquehanna ave. Shortly after the arrival of police to disperse the crowds, calm settled over the area.

Negro and whites were sitting side by side in neighborhood tap rooms. Negro and white housewives, discussing the flare-up, regretted that it should have occurred in the community. 10-5-46

According to police records, the dead man, Harry Ulmer, 32, 2503 E. Sergeant st., died "possibly of a heart attack."

Ulmer was found stumbling in a dazed condition at Front and Dauphin sts. after he and several white men had stoned Negro homes in the district. Found by police, he was rushed to the Episcopalian Hospital where he was dead on arrival, apparently of a heart attack.

Autopsy Ordered

City morgue officials denied any bruises were on the man's body, indicative of him having been beaten. Since then police have admitted a slight bump was on Ulmer's head. An autopsy will be performed to determine the exact cause of death.

Eight Negroes, including four women and two whites, were ordered held in $300 bail each as material witnesses.

This is an eye-witness account of the brawl by a Defender reporter who arrived on the scene

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

69 Negroes Face Lynch Law

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By CARL HIRSCH

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 27.—A mass Scottsboro frameup is in the making here in the cradle of the Ku Klux Klan. Sixty-nine Negroes are being held in the local jail after a violent armed invasion of the little Negro community of Columbia by white militiamen, vigilantes and hoodlums.

Fourteen of the Negro citizens are charged with "an attempt to commit murder" which carries a penalty of up to 21 years in prison. If a wounded white policeman dies, mass murder charges will be filed, and hell may break loose again.

A Grand Jury now in session here rapidly switched its calendar to consider immediate indictment of the 69.

Meanwhile this town of 11,000, of which 3,000 are Negro, was today in a state of military occupation, with the Negro community a shambles. Thur. 2.28.46

The Eighth Ave. Negro business section was devastated yesterday when hundreds of armed hoodlums moved in firing blindly, wrecking and looting and beating innocent men, women and children.

Dozens of persons were wounded.

Julius Blair, an aged Negro druggist, told the Daily Worker that his store was turned into a shambles.

'They stole everything they could carry away and emptied the cash register,' he declared.

His son Sol, who runs a little restaurant, is one of the men being held by the authorities.

The only two whites arrested were released today.

LYNCH FEVER RAMPANT

Lynch fever is still running rampant in this town. A white policeman, Wil Wilsford, a member of the attacking party, is in the local hospital with gunshot wounds following the armed battle.

"If Wilsford dies there is no telling what will happen in this town," a deputy told me.

The district attorney's office was prepared to seek mass murder indictments in case of Wilsford's death. Thur 2-28-46

HOW IT BEGAN

The bloody invasion of the Negro community followed an incident here last Monday afternoon at a radio shop in the center of the town. A Negro woman, Gladys Stephenson, was returning a radio which failed to operate after she had paid for its repair. In the course of the discussion she was assaulted by the repair man William Fleming.

Her son James, a navy veteran who was standing outside, sprang to her defense. In the scuffle the store window was smashed. The Stephensons were arrested. Later a group of Negroes appeared at the courthouse to demand their release on bond.

By this time local hoodlums had formed a lynch mob, gathered arms and moved into attack the Negro community. An armed battle ensued, in which many were shot.

NEGROES RESIST

It was then that police, state highway patrolmen and militiamen staged an all-out machine gun assault on the Negro community, where many of the residents were gathered in groups prepared to defend their lives with shotguns, squirrel rifles and enemy weapons taken as war trophies. Finally, 70 Negroes were rounded up.

Today, the devasted Negro community took on the appearance of a wartime occupied town. Heavily-armed militiamen in full war gear patrolled the streets. A curfew was in effect.

The hunt was on for "outside agitators," with the police admitting that they were tapping telephone wires to halt any assistance or support to the embattled Negro community.

Local authorities attempted to hush up reports of the activities here. **Newspapermen were encouraged to leave town.** Statements were issued to the effect that the Columbia incident "was all over."

Meanwhile, scores of Negroes faced frame - up and long prison sentences — unless a nationwide clamor is raised in their defense.

In spite of assurances that they will be protected by the militia, Negro citizens here have locked themselves in their homes with good reason to fear for their lives.

MILITIA HAILS "VICTORY"

State militiamen, mostly teen-aged boys from nearby communities, have obviously been affected by the lynch hysteria. They boasted that they have scored a "victory" in their assault on the defenseless Negro community.

"We've just had some training in attacking enemy villages," one of them told me, "guess we showed them a few things about mopping-up operations."

Evident here is the venomous anti-Negro hysteria which is being whipped up by the Rankins and Bilbos in Congress.

BIRTHPLACE OF KKK

This region has a long background of anti-Negro violence. Several miles from here is the site where the Ku Klux Klan was founded in 1867. Thur. 2-28.46

There have been many lynchings here, the most arrogant occurring in the '20s, when a Negro was hanged on the court-house steps.

In 1934, a Negro boy was imprisoned here on a trumped-up rape charge. After a court appeal, he was finally freed. While freeing him, the sheriff tipped off a lynch mob of the boy's whereabouts. He was seized in Nashville, kidnapped and brought back to Columbia where he was hanged.

arrested, but returned to his home in Mink Slide. There the neighbors, fearing he would be followed and lynched, gathered in front of the Negro undertaking parlor and the barbershop which form the business center of Mink Slide.

Small groups of white men some carrying guns gathered on the square of the city a few blocks away, during the afternoon.

Every Negro in Columbia quietly retired within the bounds of the Negro community, Mink Slide.

Four uniformed policemen with rifles in a police car drove into Mink Slide that night. All are white. There are no Negro policemen.

Some one, either in the police car or outside fired a shot. More shots followed and all four policemen were wounded, one severely. They retreated from the community and called for reinforcements.

During the night the reinforcements came in the form of national guardsmen and state highway patrolmen, deputized by Sheriff J. J. Underwood.

These waited till dawn, when they practically demolished two city blocks of Negro homes and shops with the best of modern firearms, while a few shotguns and two target rifles were used in return fire.

It is said that some trophy weapons of German and Japanese make were also used, indicating that Negro veterans were in the fight, but this has not been confirmed.

Monday afternoon and Tuesday, white civilians were allowed to walk freely around the streets armed. Occasionally deputies have ordered them to separate when they congregated in crowds but their arms are not taken from them.

About 75 Negroes are under arrest, most of them being in jail, while two or three have been released.

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Illinois

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — While a Federal Grand Jury convened in Nashville to consider civil liberties aspects of the case, preparations for the legal lynching of 31 leaders of the Negro community continue here.

A lily white trial jury is being hand-picked to back up the work of the Grand Jury that indicted 31 victims of the terror and rioting of Feb. 25. Chief legal hope is a plea in abatement filed this week by Maurice Weaver, attorney for the NAACP. Sat 4-13-46

The plea charges that the indictments are illegal because of the systematic exclusion of Negroes **from the grand jury which handed down the charges of "attempted murder."**

Since the famed Scottsboro case, precedent has been set for the legal theory that exclusion of Negroes from petty and Grand juries makes the findings of such bodies invalid against Negroes.

The Columbia case is one of the most flagrant in recent years, since the grand jury was picked in the second day of the riot. It is charged that many of the panel members had actively participated in the raids on the Negro community and were protecting their own skins by attacking first and making charges against the victims.

Selection of the trial jury is being handled carefully by Dist. Atty. Paul F. Bumpus. The panel will contain several Negroes who can be ruled out as "unqualified." The frameup can not be too blatant, for public opinion in a large part of Columbia, including Negroes and white trade unionists is firmly opposed to the frame-up maneuverings.

Saturday

Already Bumpus has enlisted the aid of a group called "The Southern Association for the Improvement of Colored Citizens"—apparently a play on the name of the NAACP—to help soothe public opinion. 4-13-46

Bumpus has published a letter from the head of the group, P. L. Harden, who calls himself a Negro lawyer of Jackson, Tenn. Harden's plea is to "let Tennessee" handle the Columbia matter. "The quicker this matter is settled and forgotten the better off we all will be," the renegade adds.

Deliberations of the Federal Grand Jury in Nashville are being aided by three Department of Justice representatives who arrived there to conduct investigations. Depositions of the defendants are being presented.

"Gestapo methods are being used around Columbia," Malcolm C. Dobbs, white, of Birmingham said this week in Chicago.

Dobbs, a delegate to the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America conference here, and his party of five Negro veterans were detained and questioned for an hour by Columbia police late last week.

As their car entered Columbia, a policeman halted the party by shouting, "Hey. What are you doing with those niggers?"

Dobbs explained that he worked with the Negroes, whereupon the officer asked him if he always worked with "niggers."

Dobbs, a combat veteran who holds the Purple Heart, replied that he was a welfare worker and worked with all peoples.

Dobbs and his party were finally released after an hour of questioning at the police department. The officers kept their hands on their guns and checked and rechecked the party's route.

Payment of a $10 bond, for which they received no receipt, won their freedom.

Tennessee Lynchers Spread Dragnet

Daily Worker

By CARL HIRSCH

New York, N.Y.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 28.—A dragnet was spread here today for more Negro victims of a gigantic frameup being prepared by state and town authorities. A score of Negroes were added to the 69 now being held in prison without bail. [The United Press places the latest number of arrested Negroes at 101.]

Meanwhile, an all-white Grand Jury was in the process of grinding out the indictments which may send innocent Negroes to prison for terms ranging up to 21 years.

The trumped-up charges followed in rapid fire order after uniformed men devastated the Negro community of Columbia earlier this week. Fri 3-1-46

Negro and white trade unionists and other Negro citizens of Columbia were encouraged in their fight against the frame-ups by reports that nationwide protests were pouring in on Gov. Jim McCord in Nashville, and that numerous citizens delegations are on their way to Columbia.

They expressed alarm over the conspiracy in the press to picture Columbia as having returned to complete "peacefulness," with the situation "under control."

"Actually, it's under the control of the legal lynchers, who are out to do a job on these innocent Negroes if they get half a chance," they declared.

The cases of almost 100 Negro citizens is now before a white supremacist grand jury, with indictment of at least a score of them considered a certainty.

The round-up of Negro citizens followed a night and a day of uncurbed violence earlier this week in which uniformed State Militia, highway patrolmen and town police raided the Negro community and turned it into a shambles.

It was part of the brutal vengeance against a Negro war veteran, James Stephenson, 19. Young Stephenson had sprung to defend his mother, who had been attacked by a white radio repairman, William Fleming.

Fleming's elder brother, Flo, a State Highway patrolman, recently won the democratic nomination for sheriff, which is tantamount to election here.

It was reported that the elder Fleming instigated the massing of patrolmen and militia men who shot their way into the Negro community, wreaking destruction and shooting down and beating Negro citizens.

The Negroes barricaded themselves in small groups, and their heroic defense was the only thing that prevented mass lynchings.

The uniformed men, however, overpowered them with riot guns and machine guns and herded scores of Negroes off to jail. The Negroes are facing charges of attempted murder.

This town remained today under military occupation, with 400 State Guardsmen patrolling the Negro community in full war gear.

Many white citizens, members of the CIO Mine, Mill and Smelter Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the AFL Operating Engineers, were preparing for a showdown battle to halt the frame-up of the Negroes.

Thus far, local, State and Federal authorities have completely whitewashed the uniformed forces for the brutal raiding of the Negro community. Fri 3-1-46

A U. S. district attorney, Horace Frierson, a native of Columbia, made a report to Washington that "there were no violations of civil rights here."

Speedy indictments of the Negro citizens were expected today. The trials are expected to begin shortly after the grand jury adjourns, which will probably be within two weeks.

Negro Vet Fought Mother's Attacker

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Thurs 2-28-46

By ROBERT MINOR

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 27.—Here is the outline of the bloody struggle at Mink Slide: Shortly after midday Monday a white proprietor of a radio repair shop kicked a woman, Mrs. Grace Stevenson, a Negro, who had called to get her repaired radio.

Mrs. Stevenson's son, James C. Stevenson, a veteran just returned from three years' service abroad, to defend his mother, struck the radio man, who fell against and broke a glass shop window.

That was the sole immediate precipitating incident of the gun fighting.

56

The character of the event as an aggression against Negroes is proven by the fact that all of the shooting occurred in the Negro community.

It was an invasion of the Negro community by white persons. There were no Negroes entering white communities, but white persons raiding a Negro community, at a time when no violence had occurred except the incident of the kicking of Mrs. Stevenson and the blow struck in her defense by her son.

The shooting was done mainly by a machine gun. The riddling of the two blocks of Negro homes and shops with machine and tommy guns occurred only at the break of dawn Tuesday, after the deputized National Guardsmen and State Police had been in cordon formation around Mink Slide most of the night.

INSISTS TENNESSEE IS 'FAIR' TO NEGRO

New York Times

Governor Says Persons Outside State Seek to Make Use of Columbia Outbreak

4-25-46

By GEORGE STREATOR

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 24—Governor Jim Nance McCord declared today that persons outside the State were using the racial disturbances at Columbia last February for their ow nends.

"We want the whole country to read the Federal reports on what happened in Columbia," he said. "We don't hide things down here."

"All we ask," he asserted, "is that people find out from the Federal agencies what happened here, and draw their own conclusions. One thing to be remembered is that there "was no lynching down here." Thurs.

The Governor said that, in general, "the Negroes are a fine lot of citizens in Columbia," and said he viewed the relationships between whites and Negroes in Tennessee as "delightfully pleasant." He charged that " a Negro fired the first shot at Columbia."

"We do not need outside interference of people who do not know what they are talking about," he said, implying that race relations would proceed on an even keel if outside agitation would subside. It is known that a Federal grand jury is carrying on investigations here of the Columbia incident, but the Governor did not suggest that any new developments would be disclosed before the jury findings which are expected momentarily.

The Negro soldier in Tennessee "is getting the same consideration as any other GI," the Governor stated. N.Y. N.Y.

This was particularly true of the Tennessee State Department of Veterans' Affairs, he said, although there had been "unjust criticism" all along the line.

He said that the handling of veterans' problems at the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial College had been "fair," and that the Negro veteran was getting all that the law and the funds would allow. 4-25-46

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which maintains offices at 212½ Union Street, maintains that news has been suppressed about the Columbia situation.

A pamphlet, widely circulated in Nashville, states that no race riot took place in Columbia.

"The story of the lynch mob and its attacks on the Negro community" have been suppressed, it reads.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Fair Trials Urged

Riot Evidence Piles Up; 200 Are Quizzed

Pittsburgh Courier, Pa.

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — While a delegation representing fifty-six national organizations was calling on Attorney General Tom Clark in Washington last week, demanding a full investigation of the violence against Negroes here Feb. 25-26, Paul F. Bumpus, district attorney in Columbia, revealed that about 200 persons had been questioned in an eleven-day probe of the racial disturbance.

Bumpus said he would present the evidence to the Maury County Grand Jury before the end of the month.

3-23-46

Bumpus and other officials declined to say what was revealed by the large amount of evidence and stacks of depositions that had been taken from testimony of persons called in for the investigation.

Saturday

EMERGENCY CONFERENCE

The delegation in Washington waited on Atty. Gen. Clark after an emergency meeting had been called by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and other groups. An investigation was promised.

Meanwhile, the Department of Justice revealed that it is studying a report to determine whether any violation of Federal law occurred.

The conference in Washington adopted a resolution which calls for prosecution of those who were responsible for the violence under the Federal Civil Rights Statute; a protest to Governor Jim McCord of Tennessee, and demand for a fair trial of the accused; support from all organizations, particularly organized labor, for mass meetings and the naming of a coordinating committee to blueprint an overall campaign to assist the accused.

In part, the resolution said:

"The wanton police raid upon and destruction of the business section of the Negro community . . . the mass arrests and conspiracy to railroad to prison terms the victims of this violence, and the murder in the Columbia jail of two of the defendants, demonstrate a growing pattern by the State and local police, under the cloak of the law, to deprive citizens of their fundamental constitutional rights.

"The police and judicial terror against labor minorities was given dramatic expression at Columbia. There the Negro community was threatened with violence at the hands of a white lynch mob, and only a spontaneous determination by the Negroes to defend themselves caused the mob to be frustrated."

3-23-46

WOULD TAKE SAME ACTION

In Nashville, Tenn., Governor McCord said: "We will have no statement until the FBI reports have been studied, except to say that if a similar situation should arise elsewhere in the State we would take the same action as we took in Columbia."

Throwing cold water on the delegation that called on Atty. Gen. Clark, District Attorney Bumpus told the press that persons in the Nation's capital making plans for formation of a Nation-wide organization of protest over recent racial skirmishes "are not interested in obtaining the facts," and that leaders of the group "include Reds and agitators whose only interest is the overthrow of our system of government."

"If these persons are interested in the situation," he continued, "why don't they urge the prosecution of the persons who fired on and wounded four city policemen and later wounded three members of the Tennessee Highway Patrol."

Bumpus said he is "thoroughly convinced that the representatives of various organizations allegedly investigating the orders do not have the interests of Negroes at heart . . ."

The riot took place in Columbia after a colored woman, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, and her son, James, engaged in an altercation with a white radio repairman, William Fleming. The beaten woman and her son were jailed and later released under bond. During their stay in jail, a white mob made an effort to enter the prison and lynch the couple, it was reported.

News of the planned lynching spread, and Negroes armed and barricaded themselves in houses and buildings. They returned gunfire when whites drove by and fired into these houses and buildings. Later 101 Negroes were ushered from their homes and jailed. Two of these colored men were fatally wounded in jail by a police officer

Sat

Last of the two jailed Negroes were released last week after bonds of $5,000 had been posted for each of the men, John McKizen, 26, and Robert Gentry, 24, Z. Alexander Looby, attorney for the NAACP in Nashville, revealed. A hearing was held with the hope of having the bonds reduced, but the court held that thirteen other Negroes involved in the riot had posted bail of the same amount.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, already has taken a lead in the case. The NAACP and other influential organizations will provide legal aid for the defendants. Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for the NAACP, is due to arrive here in a few days. He will be assisted by Atty. Looby and Atty. Maurice Weaver in defending the riot victims.

Meanwhile, here in Columbia, police and law officials refuse to comment on reports that patrolmen and members of the State Militia destroyed Negro business houses and fired on Negroes without cause.

Sitting on a Powder Keg

Afro American Baltimore, Md

Sat 3-9-46

Last week's unpleasantness at Columbia, Tenn., serves to remind us that in many sections of the nation there are powder kegs of racial tension just waiting for someone to light the fuse.

A simple "incident" in any of these centers might serve to set in motion sub-surface forces capable of far more violent and costly consequences than those at Columbia.

When things like this happen, we are always at a disadvantage because the forces of law and order have white faces. Stripped of protection, even where we are numerically strong, we are at the literal mercy of those who would destroy us and the things we represent. Prompt action of the Federal Government in taking over the functions of State is necessary when matters have progressed this far.

How much better if such tragedies can be prevented through the combined action of citizens of both races working in unison. Unfortunately, there are some areas where there is little hope of such preventive action.

The threat of vigorous Federal prosecution is about the only effective deterrent here. The office of Attorney General Tom Clark can reassure us greatly by getting tough instead of permitting the usual whitewash which has characterized so many of the so-called "investigations" in the South.

Troopers Storm Defenders

Journal & Guide

Norfolk, Va.

Sat 3-2-46

Admit Casualties In First Meager Reports From City

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—State troopers on Tuesday morning attacked Negro citizens barricaded here in their section of this South Central Tennessee community and were repulsed, in the first racial flare-up of the post-war period in this country, it was reported.

According to a prominent news syndicate, rumors of a lynching in the city were rampant. Detailed information as to the exact cause of the disorders which began Monday night is still sketchy.

HOW IT STARTFD

Sheriff J. J. Underwood of Maury county, Tenn., stated that the disturbance started after Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, shoved a white radio repairman, William Fleming, 28, through a plate glass window on the public square during the afternoon of the 25th. No statement has been released as to what caused Mrs. Stephenson and her son to assault Fleming. Later, the mother and son were placed under arrest.

COLORED CITIZENS REBEL

The resentment of colored citizens of the town burst its bounds. In the shooting that followed, seven were injured including four officers.

To curb the clash, Gov. Jim McCord ordered four companies of the Tennessee State Guard here. In addition, 45 State highway patrolmen were sent to the scene. They were under the command of the State Safety Commissioner, Lynn Bomar.

Armed white citizens thronged the public square and other sections of the city.

RIOT PREPARATION

Officials set up riot guns in the public square. The colored section known as "Mink Slide" was encircled by State Guardsmen and highway patrolmen. Several persons were arrested on charges of carrying weapons, and according to reports, these persons were predominantly Negroes.

The injured officers in King's Daughters' Hospital, according to authentic sources, are: Police Chief J. W. Griffin, Patrolmen Sam Richardson, Vernon Stofel, and Will Wilsford. The latter was believed to be critically injured.

The men were fired on when they sought to repluse infuriated colored citizens early in the night.

Fleming, one of the party who precipitated trouble, is also in the hospital, but his injuries, it is said, are of a minor nature.

KKK BORN IN TENN.

Tennessee is historically an American battleground in the fight between freedom and oppression. Near Columbia, barely 25 miles away, at Pulaski the infamous Ku Klux Klan was born in 1865 as what was described as a "youthful prank."

Next to Virginia, the state was the chief battle scene of the Civil War. 454 engagements were fought there including Gen. Grant's victory at Shiloh in April of 1862. All told, the state furnished 115,000 soldiers for the Confederate Army, and 31,000 for the Union Army.

However, sentiment was strongly pro-Union despite the Act of Secession in 1861, engineered by state leaders.

Shot First With 'Unloaded' Rifle

Afro American

Baltimore, Md.

All Weapons Checked, Says Tennessee Sheriff

Sat 3-9-46

FBI PROBES RIOT

Walter White on Scene to Plan Defense Action

(Other Photos on Page 20)

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Tension in this town mounted greatly yesterday with the slaying of William Gordon and James Johnson, two of the prisoners held incommunicado in the Maury County jail.

Following what authorities termed an outburst of gunplay, during which another prisoner and a deputy sheriff were wounded, 42 others of the more than 100 held were transferred to the Davidson County jail at Nashville for safekeeping.

Weapons Checked Twice

Although Sheriff J. J. Underwood said that all confiscated weapons had been checked twice to make certain that they were unloaded, it was said that the gunplay began when one prisoner seized a confiscated weapon and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm.

Patrolmen outside the room in which the confiscated weapons were stored rushed in and began shooting. The prisoner wounded was identified as Napoleon Stewart. Gordon, according to Darnell, was the man who shot him.

According to Sheriff Underwood, the men had been taken into the room to be told that they were to be released under a small bond of $250 "because we didn't consider them leaders in the disorders."

Although the situation was judged to be tense enough to double the State Guardsmen on duty to 1000, the 42 persons moved to Davidson County jail were returned to Columbia at 4 a.m. Mar. 1.

Shortly thereafter, on Mar. 2, writs of habeas corpus seeking the release of 34 of those held in jail were filed by Maurice Weaver, NAACP attorney, who with Z. Alexander Looby of Nashville, a member of the NAACP legal committee, had prepared them.

Meanwhile, Walter White,

Walter White on Scene

NAACP executive secretary, arrived by plane from New York to plan for the legal defense of all persons under charges.

"This is no ordinary case," White said. "A first-hand look at the situation reveals even more outrageous handling than was indicated in the newspaper stories.

"The killing of two prisoners in the jail and the wounding of another indicate what the colored citizens of the small community of Columbia are up against.

"Unless they receive outside aid, unless the country is aroused to condemn the kind of thing that took place in Columbia, colored citizens of small communities throughout the nation will be helpless."

Plea for Contributions

Because the defense will be expensive because of the number of persons involved and the broad issues, he added, contributions from individuals and organizations are vital. Money should be sent to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 20 W. 40th St., New York 18, N.Y.

Explaining the situation further, Mr. White charged that there had been marked vandalism by the State militia, the office of Dr. F. L. Hawthorne and that of an insurance company having been completely demolished, with all. of the furniture and equipment.

Sat 3-9-46

White Attorney Goes Bail

It has also been revealed that a wealthy white attorney, R. S. Hoskins of Nashville, was one of those who signed the bonds for the release of Julius, Charles and Sol Blair, Cal Lockridge and James Morton, all prominent businessmen.

Other signers of bonds were Martin Payne, Julius Blair and

James Morton.

FBI Launches Investigation

A full-fledged investigation of the racial disturbances which have gripped this community for the past several days was launched Wednesday by U.S. Attorney Horace Frierson on orders of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The probe, authorized by J. Edgar Hoover, followed a charge by Mr. White that activities of State Guardsmen and highway patrolmen in the searching of colored citizens' homes for weapons was a direct violatio nof the U.S. Constitution.

Hysteria swept the community following the arrest Monday night of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, after they had allegedly pushed a white clerk in a radio repair shop through a plate glass window.

When it was learned that the mother and son were released under $3,000 bail, whites armed with shotguns began gathering and moving toward the colored section, called Mink Slide.

14 Persons Wounded

The town of 12,000 was immediately thrown into riotous disorder, resulting in four policemen and ten civilians being shot and the arrest of 100 persons, only 3 white, before order was restored.

Although the Stephenson incident was given by Sheriff J. J. Underwood as the spark which set off the disturbances, local observers expressed the opinion that the real cause for resentment was the wide wage differentials between white and colored workers in the near by Monsato chemical plant.

Lower Wages Admitted

State Attorney General Paul Bumpus was the first person to call attention to this angle of the affair, although he claimed it was because "colored and white were working side by side" in the plant.

But the wage issue was the real motive for resentment, it was admitted by plant workers and Jennings Perry, editor of the Nashville Tennesseean, who said:

"For some time we have all known that colored people were receiving lower wages than white people for the same work at the Mansota plant."

Resentment of GI's

According to local leaders, another basic cause of the disturbance is the deep resentment of many returned service men of the attempts of certain elements of the white citizenry to treat colored persons with contempt and abuse.

Although the disorders had been quelled, a tenseness still gripped the community, Wednesday night. All automobiles, buses and trains entering the area were checked by patrolmen, who, with the militia, were virtually the only persons remaining on the streets.

The entire colored business district, a block on E. Eighth St., after having been wrecked by gunfire, was closed to traffic and under constant patrol by members of the State Guard.

Bail Denied

In addition, relatives of the jailed citizens have not been permitted to pass beyond the line of guardsmen patroling the entrance to the jail, and efforts to make bond for the prisoners had proved futile late Wednesday.

Although the public schools were closed on Tuesday, along with the business establishments, they were opened on Wednesday, leaders of both the colored and white groups having indicated a desire to avoid a more serious clash.

Upon arrival here Tuesday afternoon, after 500 State troops had been sent, Gov. James McCord said, "We're gravely concerned over the maintenance of order, and our forces will remain here as long as it is necessary to keep order."

Black Belt Surrounded

Riot guns were set up in the public square, scene of the alleged assault.

The patrolmen deployed through the section after units of the State Guard maintained an all-night vigil about the area.

Highway police dispersed 25 white civilians who were standing around armed with shotguns when they reached the section.

Lynn Bomar, State safety commissioner, said 12 suspected ringleaders were among 100 persons arrested on charges of assault with attempt to commit murder, and disorderly conduct. The cases will go to the grand jury immediately.

Two of these suspects were James Morton, colored undertaker, and Sol Blair, prominent barber and political leader.

They were seized, along with 10 others, when highway police raided Morton's home. All 12 were charged with attempted murder.

400 Weapons Seized

Bomar said four shotguns, two .22 rifles, a revolver, and four open bottles of whisky were found in Morton's home.

Mayor Eldridge Denham imposed a curfew Tuesday, ordering "all persons not engaged in maintaining order or necessary business to remain off the streets from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m."

This was followed up with a house-to-house search in both the colored and white areas which netted 400 automatic rifles, shotguns, pistols, knives, razors, other weapons and much ammunition.

NAACP Asks Action

In New York, Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, sent a telegram to Governor McCord urging him to "exercise every possible means of seeing that mob violence is stopped and the guilty punished."

In another telegram to U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark, Mr. White requested him to "act promptly and vigorously to safeguard the constitutional rights of the colored citizens against State violation of those rights."

Arrested 3 Whites

However, he added, that when he went to the public square where about 40 to 50 unarmed white men had congregated, he noted that some had been drinking and arrested three of the group.

It was not until he learned of the shooting of the four officers on Eighth St. that he requested aid of the Tennessee highway patrolmen and later called Governor McCord

After his men had made a thorough combing of the homes of the 3,000 colored residents, Bomar mounted a truck equipped with a loudspeaker; proclaiming to the residents as he rode through the streets:

Appeal for Peace

"I want you people to know that we are here to protect you as well as the people on the other side of town.

"We have had trouble in the Mink Slide district, but it is all over now and we want everything to be peaceful."

Mayor Surprised

The mayor said before imposing the curfew:

"Our racial relations have been all right here, and there has been no indication of anything that would build up something like this," the mayor asserted.

Tension in Square

John Fleming, brother of the repairman, appealed to the restless crowd in the public square—many of whom were colored, to "let well enough alone and don't stir up more trouble."

The sheriff alleged that while the guardsmen and patrolmen were en route to the scene, colored citizens drew quietly to their section of town; and that when local officers entered the area they were fired upon.

Resent Cops' Visit

Patrolman Vernon Stofel said the four wounded officers made two trips into Mink Slide to assure the people "we would keep the peace.

"On our second trip we found that the street lights had been in the public square's crowd with- shot out. As we moved along the darkened street, somebody shouted 'halt,' and a shotgun blasted away."

Stofel and his three fellow officers were wounded slightly, but Patrolman Will Wilsford, 60, was critically wounded by buckshot in the head, mouth and chest.

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35 ARE INDICTED IN COLUMBIA RIOT

Birmingham Age-Herald

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 22—(AP)—The Maury County Grand Jury returned 11 indictments today against 31 Negroes and four white men in connection with racial disorders here last month in which two Negroes were killed and several other persons injured. Ala.

The indictments contained charges including assault with intent to commit murder, carrying dangerous and deadly weapons and attempt to commit a felony. Several Negroes were named in more than one indictment. Sat. 3-23-46

The four white men were indicted on the last count.

Foreman J. D. Stanfill said the Grand Jury investigated more than 100 cases in its brief inquiry into the disorders.

The next regular session of Circuit Court opens May 27.

FBI to Probe Columbia Race Riot

Richmond Times Dispatch

Prisoners Are Released On Habeas Corpus Writ

Richmond, Va.

COLUMBIA, TENN., March 4—(AP)—The Federal Bureau of Investigation moved in here today to investigate racial troubles which resulted in the death of two Negroes and the wounding of 12 other persons here last week. Tue. 3-5-46

Horace Frierson, United States district-attorney at Nashville, said FBI agents had been sent to Columbia at his request "for the purpose of determining whether or not there had been any violations of any Federal statutes."

He added: "The agents are now in Columbia engaged in this investigation."

Frierson said the Justice Department, also at his request, had sent James E. Ruffin, special assistant to United States Attorney-General Tom Clark, to Nashville to confer with him on the Columbia disorders.

Frierson, whose home is Columbia, recently reported to the department on a brief investigation of his own last week.

Habeas Corpus Granted

Meanwhile, a writ of habeas corpus for release of Negro prisoners still held in jail here in connection with the troubles was granted by County Judge W. C. Whitthorne today.

Whitthorne granted release of the prisoners conditioned upon posting of $250 bonds each and set a hearing on the writ before Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram at 10 A. M. Wednesday.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood said that only about 18 Negroes of the more than 100 arrested since last Monday night remained in the county jail. He said additional prisoners would be released "just as quickly as they are questioned." Tue. 5-5-46

Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney who represents the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, filed a petition for the habeas corpus writ Saturday, alleging that 34 prisoners were being held "incommunicado."

Guardsmen Withdraw From Columbia, Tenn., After Racial Trouble

Birmingham, Ala., News

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 4—(AP)—This city took another step toward normal living today after a week of racial disorders which resulted in the death of two Negroes and the wounding of 12 other persons.

The State Guard—1,000 strong—moved out last night and left 65 State Highway Patrolmen to maintain order.

County Judge W. C. Whitthorne is scheduled to rule today on a habeas corpus petition for the release of 34 Negroes held in connection with the past few days' violence. Mon. 3-4-46

Mayor Eldridge Denham yesterday appealed over the radio to all citizens, "white and Negroes alike," to return to normal relations.

The habeas corpus petition was filed Saturday by Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

It contended that the 34 Negroes, among more than 100 jailed during the week, were being held "incommunicado" in violation of their constitutional rights.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood, whose call to Gov. Jim McCord brought the State Guard here a week ago, said there are no Negroes in jail whose bonds have not been set and that the number of prisoners held is "considerably less" than the 34 mentioned in the petition.

Yesterday Ira H. Latimer, executive director of the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee, and Samuel Neuberger and the Rev. Joseph Moore, both representing the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, conferred with local officials. They conferred earlier with the governor in Nashville.

The assault charges against Gladys Stephens and her son, James, whose arrest Monday and release under $3,500 bond each apparently set off the disorders, will not be presented to the Grand Jury until the next term of Maury County Court, court officials said.

The two Negroes were arrested after they allegedly pushed William Fleming, 28, white radio repairman, through a plate glass window after an argument over a repair bill. Mon. 3-4-46

Jamaica Tense In Riot's Wake

Chicago Defender
Chicago, Ill.

8 Lives Lost; Union Dictator Blamed

Sat 3-2-46

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Semi-tranquility reigned in Kingston's streets this week after eight persons had died as a result of a feud between two rival trades unions.

Climax of the feud came when white-haired William Alexander Bustamante, founder-dictator of the Bustamante Industrial Trades Union, led an army of strike-breakers through Kingston's streets to the Mental Hospital where members of the Jamaican Trade Union Council were on strike.

Bustamante's group, all dock workers, clashed with the Trade Union Council pickets at the hospital gates and when the fighting ceased, three participants were dead. In addition, five of the institution's patients died natural deaths during the battle. Although a number of the asylum's inmates escaped during the clash, authorities had rounded up all of the fugitives by Saturday evening.

Bustemante Blamed

The asylum employes, who were backed up in their walkout by Kingston prison, fire department and railway workers, stated that "the uncalled for action" on the part of Bustamante and his union was solely responsible for the wave of terror that gripped the Jamaican capital.

The white-haired union leader, who is also Minister of Communications and head of Jamaica's Labor Government, is labeled by progressive labor leaders "a rabble-rouser of the most inflammatory order. "Bustamante was accompanied in his march on the Mental Hospital by Frank Pixley, Minister of Social Services.

Food supplies here have been endangered by the walkout of 3,300 public utility workers and communications may soon be paralyzed. A Canadian infantry regiment was ordered to stand by Wednesday in order to take over essential services and to block possible food shortages and continue communication services.

Although tempers seemed to have cooled between the two rival labor forces after Saturday's clashes, latest reports indicate that both sides still are maintaining an uncompromising attitude. An early settlement of the strike appeared extremely remote Wednesday.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Walter White

Chicago Defender, Ill.

White Southerners' 'Superiority' Perplexing

THE MORE this columnist sees of southerners in position of power the more perplexed he is that any white southerner should harbor any notions of his own superiority. This observation is based upon a recent experience in Tennessee in connection with the disgraceful rioting at Columbia. I had wired Governor Jim McCord that I was coming to Tennessee and wished a conference with the Governor. Because previous experiences have caused it to be wise always to have a witness at such conferences lest I be misquoted afterwards, this commentator asked the brilliant and courageous Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville attorney and the Reverend William J. Faulkner, Dean of the Chapel of Fisk University, to join in the interview.

We arrived at the Capitol slightly in advance of the hour set for the meeting. A young, (though he did not wear a veterans' button) verbose and opinionated white soldier introduced himself as Bayard Tarpley, the Governor's secretary. He promptly informed me that the Governor did not feel well and would see me for a few minutes but "He can see these other fellas anytime." An explosion was averted by the entrance of the Governor, a former mule auctioneer, who commenced the interview with all three of us present. 4-13-46

Admits Tapping Telephones

ONE WOULD HAVE thought the secretary to be the Governor. He sat at the head of the table and put his feet on it. Whatever question was asked was answered by him with great volubility, cocksureness and misinformation. Like most southerners, he took refuge in belligerence and racial superiority when any of his statements were questioned by any one of the three Negroes present. Mr. Looby, whose courage is matched only by his ability, caught Tarpley in a direct contradiction of statements. Tarpley shouted, "Don't you tell me what I said, I'm telling you what I said!" 4-13-46

We let Tarpley talk because the more he opened his mouth the more damaging were the statements he made. He related not ashamedly but proudly how the telephone wires of Negro residents of Columbia had been tapped and their conversations recorded, seemingly unaware not only that the Supreme Court of the United States

People, Politics And Places

had outlawed wire-tapping but even that there was a United States Supreme Court. On another occasion he made the sweeping assertion that "nigras all over Nashville and all over the United States have been buying and storing up arms." When challenged to prove this statement, he couldn't because he had no such proof.

Exhibits Moral Character Saturday

TARPLEY'S moral character was exhibited the following day when one of the local papers, obviously quoting him, declared that the delegation and in particular myself had stated that "We had not seen eye to eye with the Governor" but that "after hearing the facts" we thought the situation had been handled rather well. The moral delinquency of the entire South was further exhibited when even the slightly more liberal of two local newspapers, after promising to publish a true statement of the facts, would print only its own version of the repudiation of Tarpley's statement. 4-13-46

If white southern superiority is evidenced by these two official examples, may God have mercy on the future of the South.

High Officials Of State Are Grilled On Columbia "Raid"

Nashville, Tennessee

Fri 4-19-46

State

Julius Blair and Sons, Rev. Calvin Lockridge and Others Give Testimony Describing Treatment They Got "At the Hands of the Law"

An unprecedented departure from the custom of ignoring defenseless Negroes on the matter of enforcing the provisions of Federal and State law as laid down in the constitution, was being taken in the historic Federal Court building located at 8th Avenue North and Broadway this week with indications that the probe into the way minions of the law behaved themselves at Columbia, in the fatal week beginning last February 25 would not end even at the close of this week. It seemed that the state was about to witness a vindication of the stirring words of the poet that: "The mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small." Fri 4-19-46

Unhurried Federal investigators, representing Attorney General Tom Clark were patiently laying before the Federal Grand Jury the evidence gathered by FBI sleuths who barged in on Columbia shortly after two of the men confined to the Maury County jail were shot to death by officers of the law, who held them in custody. It is reported that some 200 pages of evidence was gathered by the FBI on their visit to Columbia and it is believed that this evidence, and not any statements in a pamphlet distributed by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which was referred to by Judge Elmer Davies in his instructions, is what the three able lawyers representing the Department of Justice are placing before the Grand Jury for its consideration, and to determine if any Tennessee law-enforcement officers are guilty of depriving Columbia citizens of their Constitutional rights.

It has been pointed out, if the lawyers handling the case before the Federal Grand Jury were to undertake the use of pamphlets and newspaper clippings to develop the Government's case there is no telling how long they would hold the Grand Jury in session, as there is a mountain of such "evidence" some of it fact, some of it rumor, but all of it very generally, within the realm of matter which the authors of it, under the Bill of Rights of the Federal Constitution, are guaranteed the right to publish and distribute, without having to get any permit to do so.

There is of a necessity strict secrecy being maintained regarding what various persons who have appeared before the Federal Grand Jury have revealed. It is presumed however, that there is considerable conflict between what has been stated by the military contingent and Negro citizens who are claiming they were denied their Constitutional rights. The belief is held that charges of the violation of the Constitutional rights of citizens must have been made for the most part against members of the state highway patrol. This was being guessed by citizens who learn that Chief Lynn Bomar of the patrol was before the Grand Jury a whole day. General Dickerson of the State Guard, it is learned was before the Grand Jury for half of one day. Also, it is learned, Sheriff J. J. Underwood was before the Grand Jury for half a day.

In contrast to the long time these high officials were before the Grand Jury, was the comparatively short time that colored Columbia citizens who claimed to have been victims of a raid on their homes and places of business, spent before the jury. Fri 4-19-46

Those who attach significance to the long time leading law enforcement officers were before the Grand Jury, think that they must have been quizzed extensively on why they found it necessary to put the Negro section under such complete surveillance; why they required passes from Negro business people to go on business missions out of town and why a virtual state of martial law was invoked for the Colored section of Columbia in contrast to other sections of the town in which, supposedly, lived the members of the mob which incited the Negroes of Columbia to run to their section of the town and arm themselves in anticipation of mob invasion.

It is believed that much of the quizzing of officers is on the twin killings which took place in the jail, also about the bizarre story carried in the daily press regarding how one of the young men who was slain got the "right" bullet to put in a gun grabbed from a whole cluster of firearms, loaded the gun and began shooting at a deputy sheriff.

One of the most serious of the offenses, it is believed, that will be charged against officers during the probe will be that of denying to an attorney the right to see his clients, to confer with them and tell them of their Constitutional rights with regard to giving testimony to arresting officers. The charge that this was done has been made publicly by Attorney Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, a veteran of World War II, who has told of the "red tape" he encountered in trying to see Sheriff Underwood and get permission to go to the jail to talk with his clients. He states he was unable to get the names of the men who had been arrested and put in jail during the first few days he was in Columbia. There is nothing lawyers resent more than efforts upon the part of law officers to prevent them from talking to their clients. Mr. Weaver was "plenty hot" about the treatment given him in this matter. Just back from long service in the war of fighting "dictatorship" abroad, the young lawyer appeared doubly incensed over being denied his legal rights in his own country and his own state. Fri 4-19-46

Shortly after the FBI arrived on the scene in Columbia, Attorney Weaver and Attorney Z. Alexander Looby instituted heabeas corpus proceedings in order to get the names of all of their clients that were confined to jail. This action got prompt results. As representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Attorneys Weaver and Looby let Maury County offiicals know that they were representing each and every one of the men that had been rounded up and arrested and that they were prepared, in the name of the NAACP, to furnish bonds, in whatever amounts required, for each of their clients.

Julius Blair and sons, James Morton, the undertaker, Martin, the grocer, Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist pastor and some thirty more citizens who have been indicted on charges of attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, before the fact and after the fact, do not know when they will be tried for these alleged crimes. The Columbia authorities have postponed the trials indefinitely, and there is a belief they would like to be rid of the necessity of prosecuting the men. One thing which may have had an effect in postponing the trials is the fact that Attorneys Weaver, Looby and Thurgood Marshall have laid the grounds for having any convictions obtained rendered null and void. No Negro was on the grand jury which brought the indictments, and the Supreme Court of the United States has said repeatedly that no Negro has been lawfully indicted in any community where there is a "tradition" that no Negro is eligible for jury service.

It is held that it would be very embarrassing to Attorney General Bumpus down in Columbia to conduct a long-drawn-out trial, ending with the usual prosecutor's speech, which paints the defendant as having committed one of the most terrible crimes in the history of the country, and then, in the final analysis, find out that his effort to convict was illegal from the very beginning, because of the race prejudice evinced by county authorities in not putting Negroes on Maury County juries.

Such an outcome, it is held, might hurt Mr. Bumpus if an when he Governor. Fri 4-19-46

There was some talk to the effect that the Hon. Lynn Bomar has been grooming himself for governor or something and had expected his work as commander of the highway patrol would give him a big boost for higher political preferment. That, however, was before the troubles

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Greetings Sent To Negro Mothers

Daily Worker Sat 5-11-46

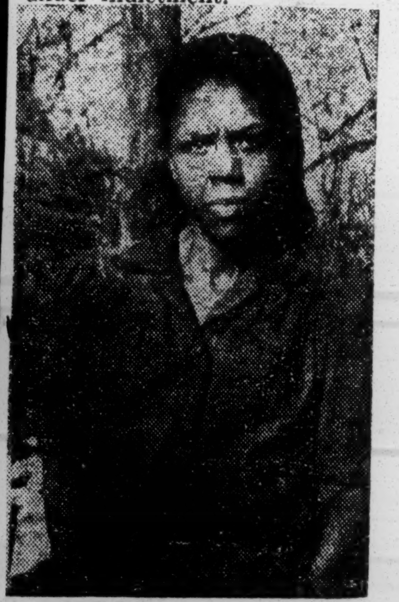
New York, N.Y.

Mother's Day greetings went yesterday from the Bedford Stuyvesant Communist Party Section to Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, one of the innocent victims of the recent Columbia, Tenn., terrorism against the Negro people.

It was Mrs. Stephenson who, with her veteran son, James, was assaulted and beaten on Feb. 25 in the white business section of the town. The assault ignited a mob lynch spirit which brought a reign of terror and death over the Negro community.

The Bedford Stuyvesant CP also greeted the selection of Mrs. Clarissa Clement of Louisville, Ky., a Negro mother of seven, who has been designated American Mother of 1946. Sat 5-11-46

The Communists pledged support to free Mrs. Stephenson and the 30 other innocent defendants now under indictment.



MRS. STEPHENSON

At 75, He Goes Home For Trial in Riot Case

A.M. New York, N.Y.

Wed. 5-8-46

Columbia, Tenn., Man Tells of Hearing Two Fatal Shots

By Gerald Blank

Julius Blair, 75, tall, broad-shouldered, erect and dignified, leaves New York City tomorrow to return to Columbia, Tenn., to face trial, along with several other prominent members of that town's Negro community, on charges of "attempted murder."

The white-haired old man has been speaking at rallies of chapters of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People here and in nearby communities in a drive the NAACP is conducting with these objectives:

¶ Legal defense of the Negro victims of Tennessee mob terror.

¶ Prosecution of persons actually responsible for the Columbia pogrom that started the week of Feb. 26.

¶ Focusing of national attention so that public opinion be alerted against a recurrence of the Columbia disorders.

¶ Restitution wherever possible of property losses of victims of "official" vandalism.

Wed. 5-8-46

Familiar Pattern

The happenings in Columbia conformed to a familiar pattern—an otherwise minor incident involving a white and a Negro, an arrest (of the Negro, naturally) and, in bars and other hangouts in the white parts of town, the boiling of chivalrous Southern blood. But this time the lynch mob's victim was spirited away and safely out of town before the yelling, drunken crowd even got to the jail, so the fury was directed at the entire Negro community.

Before it was over, State patrolmen and guardsmen in full battle dress, armed with tommy-guns, automatic rifles and machine-guns, were pumping slugs through the wooden walls of Negro homes. Terrified Negroes, men, women, and children, lay flattened against the floor. In the business section, police and guardsmen, working in platoons, smashed through shop windows, chopped down doors, and littered the streets with smashed furniture.

A doctor's office was smashed and valuable medical equipment damaged beyond repair. Surgical instruments, drugs, and valuable clinical apparatus were wantonly destroyed or stolen. Records of the Atlanta Life Insurance Co. were reduced to a hopeless shambles. At the peak of the orgy, some rioter with a steady hand left his autograph on the cover of one of the coffins in an undertaking parlor while his companions cut up draperies, smashed chandeliers and ripped lighting fixtures from their sockets. The signature, in white chalk, read "K K K."

Of the Negroes who were arrested early that morning, two later were shot to death at the jail by guards. The reason given had a familiar sound. One of them had "seized a rifle" with which he presumably was "attempting to escape." No reason is even given for the shooting of the other man.

Heard the Shots

Julius Blair was one of the Negro citizens who, at the suggestion of Sheriff J. J. Underwood, helped get the lynch mob's intended victim out of town the night before the raid on Mink Slide, the Jim Crow district of Columbia. When he returned and tried to provide bail for the men arrested during the raid, he was thrown into prison. He heard the shots that killed the two victims.

Wed. 5-8-46

"Life in Columbia wasn't too bad till this happened," he said. "The town has a population of about 12,000 to 15,000, of which I'd say about 3000 are Negroes. I'd been running a drug store and doing pretty well, but it sure got smashed up that day.

"I own a couple of houses with white tenants. When I finally got out on bail and met some of them they wanted to know whether I was going to make them move out. I said: 'No. You haven't done anything to me.'

Decent White People

"I guess there must be some decent white people in Columbia, who don't like what happened. Some of them go out of their way to stop me on the street, shake my hand, and tell me they're with me. But they don't want their names mentioned. They're afraid of their jobs and what their neighbors are going to think, I guess.

"One white man told my son, Saul, 'I'll be glad to help you, secretly.' (Saul Blair is one of the Negroes being held under indictment). Saul told him: 'If you can't come out in the open and help me, I'd just as soon you didn't do anything. Thanks.'

Poll Tax Club

"I guess it's different in other parts of Tennessee, but we colored folks in Columbia have been voting right along, without any trouble. We have an organization among ourselves to pay the poll tax for anyone who can't afford it. It's $2 and has to be paid 60 days before election. Often enough, it's our vote that swings an election.

"This year, for instance, one of the white women's voters' organizations was working with us to help defeat Fleming for sheriff. He's the highway patrolman who's the brother of the man who got pushed through the plate glass window."

The NAACP is throwing its entire weight into the defense of the Columbia victims of race hate and lynch law. The Committee for Justice in Tennessee, headed by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, is helping. It includes Dr. Channing H. Tobias, Dr. Frank P. Graham, F. H. La Guardia, Arthur Spingarn, Bishop G. Brownley Oxnam, and others. It can use money. Checks should be made payable to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., or to Mary White Ovington, treasurer, 20 W. 40th St., New York 18, N. Y.

Julius Blair, 75, citizen of Columbia, Tenn., where he will be tried, starting May 27, along with 40 other Negroes on charges of "attempted murder." He did not attempt to murder anybody, but white prison guards, who killed two Negroes in the Columbia jail, are not even scheduled for trial.

Photo by Steve Derry, PM

Wed. 5-8-46

Guardsmen Withdraw From Columbia, Tenn., After Racial Trouble

Birmingham, Ala.

Birmingham News

Wed 3-4-46

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 4—(AP)—This city took another step toward normal living today after a week of racial disorders which resulted in the death of two Negroes and the wounding of 12 other persons.

The State Guard—1,000 strong—moved out last night and left 65 State Highway Patrolmen to maintain order.

County Judge W. C. Whitthorne is scheduled to rule today, on a habeas corpus petition for the release of 34 Negroes held in connection with the past few days' violence.

Mayor Eldridge Denham yesterday appealed over the radio to all citizens, "white and Negroes alike," to return to normal relations.

The habeas corpus petition was filed Saturday by Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

It contended that the 34 Negroes among more than 100 jailed during the week, were being held "incommunicado" in violation of their constitutional rights.

Wed 3-4-46

Sheriff J. J. Underwood, whose call to Gov. Jim McCord brought the State Guard here a week ago, said there are no Negroes in jail whose bonds have not been set and that the number of prisoners held is "considerably less" than the 34 mentioned in the petition.

Yesterday Ira H. Latimer, executive director of the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee, and Samuel Neuberger and the Rev. Joseph Moore, both representing the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, conferred with local officials. They conferred earlier with the governor in Nashville.

The assault charges against Gladys Stephens and her son, James, whose arrest Monday and release under $3,500 bond each apparently set off the disorders, will not be presented to the Grand Jury until the next term of Maury County Court, court officials said.

The two Negroes were arrested after they allegedly pushed William Fleming, 28, white radio repairman, through a plate glass window after an argument over a repair bill.

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56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

NAACP Demands Release of 34 Facing Tennessee 'Lynch Justice'

Daily Worker New York

Mon. 3-4-46

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 3.—Release of 34 Negroes held in the jailhouse in connection with last week's bloody events in the Mink Slide Negro community was demanded today in a habeas corpus petition. The petition charged the 34, part of 101 jailed after a mob and a highway patrol detachment raked two blocks of Negro homes and shops with tommy guns, held incommunicado—"in violation of their constitutional rights."

The petition was filed with Criminal Court Judge W. C. Whitthorne by Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, attorney for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People.

Meanwhile, delegations and individual citizens conferred with Gov. Jim McCord in Nashville, calling for immediate state action against the slayers of two Negroes, James W. Johnson and William Gordon, shot while being grilled in the local jail, and wounding of 15 more persons, mostly Negroes.

Visiting the Governor yesterday were Samuel Neuberger and the Rev. Joseph Moore, National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, and Ira H. Latimer, executive director of the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee.

Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, met the Governor different times and told him uniformed highway patrolmen had gone into the Mink Slide Negro community "promiscuously shooting and mistreating Negroes."

White described his conversation with the Governor as "most pleasant," but was quick to add "we do not see eye-to-eye on some subjects." Mon. 3-4-46

The chief executive said he assured the visitors "complete justice" in the cases, but stated legal jurisdiction was out of the hands of the state and wholly in the hands of Maury County officials. Local police and officials continued to grill Negroes in the Columbia jail. They announced approximately 20 persons were questioned and released under bond or on their own recognizance. Several have been ordered back later this week for additional questioning.

Officials stated four white men had been arrested, but they refused to name them or say whether they are in jail or have been released.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood and Attorney General Paul Bumpus said in a press conference that $4,000 bail has been set for three Negroes now in the county jail. They are James Bellafant, charged with possessing a machine gun; Lloyd Kennedy, described as "continually running afoul of the law," and William E. Pillow.

An atmosphere of military occupation still hovers over the embattled wrecked and looted Negro neighborhood.

Negro businessmen, barred for a week from premises of their property, began returning only yesterday with passes issued by Sheriff Underwood to check their establishments.

Underwood and Bumpus stated they planned no arrests of what was previously described as "outside interests."

CAUSE OBSCURED

Attorney Weaver, who is seeking release of the Negroes held incommunicado, after conferring with Walter White and Alexander Lobby, Nashville Negro attorney, said he did not believe the real cause of the killing, woundings and disorders has been revealed.

He said his investigation showed a mob of 75 men formed in the Maury County yard shortly after the arrest of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, a Negro woman, and her son, James, a war veteran just returned from three years overseas service. James was charged with pushing William Fleming, radio repairman, through a glass window following an altercation in the public square in which the radioman was said to have kicked Mrs. Stephenson.

Weaver charged James Stephenson did not touch Fleming until after the latter "kicked and slapped" the ex-soldier's mother.

Attorney General Bumpus, trying to paint an optimistic picture of the situation, stated the progress of his investigation of the bloody affair is "satisfactory."

But Clark Foreman, president of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, with headquarters in Nashville, wired U. S. Attorney General Tom Clark in Washington asking him to "interfere energetically, for justice."

"Unless you do," Foreman warned, "the safety and lives of the Negro men still in custody are in danger."

The conference also called on Gov. McCord to "guarantee those who are charged with crime a fair trial in the American spirit and tradition, with all rights provided by the U. S. Constitution, and unmarred by any manifestation of the lynch spirit."

The Rev. W. J. Faulkner, dean of the chapel of Fisk University, conferred with NAACP officials in Nashville yesterday on the case.

Mon. 3-4-46

Columbia Mayor Asks Race Peace

As armed troops of the Tennessee State Guard, under command of Brig. Gen. J. M. Dickenson, patrolled the streets of this tense town, Mayor Elridge Dunham stood before a radio microphone today in City Hall and told listeners the violent events of last Monday "must not be considered a mark against citizens of Columbia as a whole."

Stating he was "deeply sorry for the trouble of the past," the Mayor urged "normal and peaceful relations as quickly as possible between Negro and white races."

"Our community has been on a firm foundation. It is old enough to cope with any problems that come our way. I doubt there is any county in the United States with a greater church membership than Maury County."

Significantly absent from the Mayor's radio appeal was a flat declaration hoped for by many citizens, against members of the mob, police and highway patrolmen who ransacked through Mink Slide with blazing firearms, forcing peaceful Negroes to be barricaded in their homes and defending themselves with whatever weapons they could find.

Instead the Mayor thanked the Highway Patrol and said their cooperation and that of the State Guard was aiding "return to normal."

Early today the Colored Ministerial Alliance of Columbia issued a call for "close cooperation between leaders of both races."

Warning For All

B'ham News, Alabama

The tension that can so quickly be created in racial relations and the terrible results that may follow are exemplified in reports of trouble and violence from Columbia, Tenn. Wed 2-27-46

According to news dispatches, there was a dispute between a radio repairman and a Negro woman and her son. The repairman is said to have been pushed through the plate glass window of his shop. A crowd soon gathered in the square. Local officials sought aid. State highway patrolmen and guardsmen were sent. Meanwhile, Negroes withdrew from the public square and congregated in a residential section. Sheriff Underwood declares that four Columbia policemen were fired upon when they went into the area. Three were wounded slightly, the fourth seriously.

Two white men were reported slightly wounded when they ventured into the section. A total of 10 wounded was reported.

The police chief said he never imagined "they would fire on us." The mayor said, "Racial relations have been all right here, and there has been no indication of anything that would build up something like this."

The Negro woman and her son involved in the trouble in the radio repair shop were arrested and released on bond. Later, some 65 persons were arrested, 12 charged with attempted murder. Wed 2-27-46

This trouble is a warning for all. Whatever our problems in racial relations, nothing except tragedy can result from incitement and violence. Upon every citizen, white and Negro, rests the solemn duty to show mutual consideration and to seek justice and fair play under all conditions.

Of course, there could be no justification whatever for pushing a man through a plate glass window. Nor is armed resistance to the law defensible in any way.

There must be the most thorough effort to impose punishment wherever due in this case.

Justice and the maintenance of law and order are the first objectives in this Columbia trouble. But they—and restraint, fair dealing and a constant effort to solve mutual problems—should also be the earnestly sought and continuing goals of us all.

The Meaning of Columbia, Tennessee

"They Defended Their Homes — and Prevented a Lynching"

Peoples Voice

By DOXEY A. WILKERSON

N.Y. new york

General Manager of *The People's Voice*

Peoples Voice

***The struggle against official lynch-terror in Columbia, Tenn., must be raised to a high level of national and international protest, involving mass action by millions of democratic peoples throughout our country and the world. There is no other way to prevent more "Columbias" which the enemies of the people are plotting for this period of post-war reaction. In building* this campaign to stop the Hitler-like terror against the Negro people of Columbia, let us begin by understanding the basic fascist character of what went on,** **by blasting the rotten lies being spread by much of the commercial press.**

Tenn

NET-WORK OF LIES

What happened in Columbia several weeks ago was far different from what most of the press reports.

- There was no "Negro uprising," as the United Press Association called it. Rather there was a deliberate, cold-blooded invasion of the Negro district by local and state police, spreading destruction wherever they went and arresting hundreds of innocent citizens with no justification whatsoever.
- There was no "howling mob" of white civilians in the traditional manner of lynch parties against the Negro people. Indeed, no decisive or effective part of the white population of Columbia, whose biggest industry is 100% organized with 700 Negro and 500 white workers in the same union (Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers of America CIO), was involved in the attack.
- There was no "protection" of "frightened Negroes" by the big, brave police, as reported in the press. Rather the police were the terrorists and vandals, doing the work which a civilian mob could not have accomplished.

Let us begin by spiking these lies which UP and AP are still pouring into the small-town papers of the South. 3-16-46

HEROIC NEGRO VETERAN

Let us build our campaign around the meaningful symbol of James (Jimmy) Stephenson, heroic veteran of World War II, who returned from the wars abroad only to run up against the old-time slave survivals he thought he was fighting to destroy. Sat.

Jimmy Stephenson saw his mother slapped and kicked on the public streets by a white shopkeeper who was trying to cheat her on a radio repair bill. He knocked hell out of the white man with a punch worthy of Joe Louis and Dorie Miller rolled into one. And when he did, he gave expression to the fighting determination of all other Negro veterans for a decent share in the democracy they fought to preserve.

Five of Defendants and counsel in Columbia, Tennessee, "rioting" case. Seated left to right: Maurice M. Weaver, Chattanooga attorney; Julius W. Blair, 76-year-old business man charged with "attempted murder"; Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville attorney and member of National Legal Committee NAACP; Walter White, Secretary, NAACP. Standing, left to right: James Martin, 37, owner of three grocery stores in Columbia; James E. Morton, 36, undertaker; Charles E. Blair, 48, merchant; Saul W. Blair, 55, owner of four-chair barber shop in Columbia; M. G. Ferguson, president of Nashville branch NAACP and accountant, Citizens Savings Bank and Trust Company.—(Photographed by J. R. Anderson, 419-4th Av, North, Nashville, Tennessee, who contributed photography to defense).

THERE WAS TO BE A LYNCHING 3-16-46

Let us make clear, further, that the militancy of the Negro people of the Mink Slide district in repelling the mob of police who invaded their area under cover of darkness on February 25, looking for Jimmy Stephenson, is all that prevented a brutal lynching in Columbia. Previously a mob had stormed the jail in a vain attempt to lynch the heroic Negro veteran. When the police raided the Negro district that night to get their intended victim for the mob, they were turned back by shot-gun fire, giving Jimmy and his mother time to flee.

They defended their homes, and thus prevented a lynching.

STORM TROOPERS AMUCK

Let us emphasize the role of the police, who, at dawn roared into the Negro district led by the brother of the white radio man who had cursed and beaten Mrs. Stephenson the day before. It was they who destroyed the Negro business district with indiscriminate machine-gun fire, who looted and wrecked like Hitler's storm troopers turned against the Jews, who left a huge KKK inscribed on a casket in the Negro undertaking parlor, who arrested more than 100 Negro citizens, charging them with "attempt to murder," and shooting two of them to death in cold blood in the county jail.

Let us also emphasize that the defense of the falsely indicted Negro citizens of Columbia will be before an all-white jury from which Negroes are systematically excluded. 3-16-46

Then let us picture the whole rotten system of Bourbon poll-tax rule of the South, strengthened by Northern financial investments, in Southern human exploitation, which lies at the root of the recent events in Columbia, Tenn.—and which will produce more "Columbia's" unless we organize the democratic power of the people to prevent it. Sat.

MOBILIZE THE PEOPLE-

We have got to defend the victims of lynch-terror in Columbia with all the power of broad mass peoples' demonstrations we can organize. There is no other way to beat back the wave of post-war anti-Negro reaction which threatens to destroy the democratic gains we won during the war and to strengthen the already substantial beachhead of fascism in America. Sat.

- Let us give every possible support to the organization of progressive white and Negro veterans—especially to the Chicago conference called for April 6 and 7, for it is the returning Negro veterans against whom this spearhead of Bourbon poll-tax reaction is being directed.
- Let us contribute money for the legal defense of the Columbia citizens accused of "attempted murder," giving every support to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties whose lawyers are at work in their behalf.
- Let us mobilize the trade unions throughout America in mass protest demonstrations against this lynch-terror, which victimizes Negroes as a means of preventing the further organization of the white and Negro workers of the South.
- Let all the peoples organizations in the country—fraternal societies, churches, YMCA and YWCA, civic associations, and all others—get into action in demanding that our federal government cast aside its pretense of "non-jurisdiction" and move to protect the American citizens of Columbia and everywhere else where lynch-terror raises its ugly head.

Let us be sure that Columbia is but the symptom of a serious plague which threatens the freedom and security of our entire nation. It must be stopped right now. Let us throw everything that we have into the building of a nation-wide, even an international, campaign against the fascist lynch-terror recently perpetrated upon the Negro people of Columbia.

Tennessee Is Touchy

Pittsburg Courier Pa. Sat 5-4-46

Touchy over the nationwide uproar following the Columbia terrorism, Gov. Jim Nance McCord of Tennessee has complained that persons outside the State are using this racial "disturbance" for their own ends, and announces that "we want the whole country to read the Federal reports on what happened in Columbia. We don't hide things down here."

Governor McCord goes on to praise the Negroes as "a fine lot of citizens in Columbia" and that relations between whites and Negroes are "delightfully pleasant," followed by the charge that "a Negro fired the first shot at Columbia."

"We do not need outside interference of people who do not know what they are talking about," the Governor continued, implying that all would have been well without outside agitation.

One would imagine from this protestation that it was "outside influences" that made a white storekeeper start the train of events that led to the tragedy by assaulting a colored woman who entered his place of business, and got properly beaten up as well as her son.

Governor McCord may regard interracial relations in Tennessee as "delightfully pleasant," but none of the scores of Negroes who were herded into the Columbia jail after being beaten and terrorized will agree with him.

Without "outside interference" the world would have been unaware of the depths to which Tennessee "law and order" could sink and would never have known how Negro homes and business were wrecked and gutted by vicious mobs, uniformed and otherwise.

"Outside interference" only occurs when it seems evident that justice and fairplay within a community or State have died.

We agree with Governor McCord that normally interracial relations in Tennessee are good (for the South) and we sincerely regret that they are not much better. Sat 5-4-46

They would be better if white people of the prominence of the Governor were as touchy about them BEFORE something happens as they get AFTER atrocities have occurred.

Now that the Columbia atrocity is a grim and stark fact, we believe the Negro defendants who have suffered so much should receive the very best legal defense even if it is necessary to carry their case to the highest court of the land.

To this end we heartily support the appeal of the Committee of 100 organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to raise $50,000 for the bailing and legal defense of the Negro victims of Columbia, Tenn., mob terrorism.

Meeting Brings Aid To Drive For Justice In Columbia Riot

Defender

NEW YORK—"The lynch spirit still lives" in Columbia, Tenn., NAACP attorney Maurice Weaver told a group of 100 civic leaders at a meeting in Freedom House this week. 5-25-46

As a result of the meeting new pledges of assistance to assure justice for victims of the riot were obtained from business, labor, church and fraternal groups.

Principal speakers were Weaver and Z. Alexander Looby, both of whom investigated the case for the NAACP. Chicago Ill

Weaver told the meeting that Negroes had fired on an armed white mob because they had no faith in the law enforcement agencies of the city. They had been warned previously by a sheriff to hide the young veteran whose defense of his mother against kicks and blows precipitated the mob's anger. 5-25-46 Sat.

"When that sheriff told them to hide that boy, he in effect told them that the law would give no protection," Looby told the meeting.

Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, asked that demands for justice be sent U. S. Attorney General Tom Clark.

NAACP Lawyers Map Brief For Legal Defence

Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.
Tues 3-5-46

Secretary White Flies To Tenn. First Hand Study

NASHVILLE, Tenn. —(SNS)— Writs of habeas corpus seeking the release of 34 persons held in jail in connection with the rioting at Columbia, Tenn., February 26, were filed by Maurice Weaver, NAACP attorney, on March 2. The writs were prepared by Weaver and Z. Alexander Looby, of this city who is a member of the NAACP national legal committee.

Walter White, NAACP secretary, who flew here from New York, stated that although the Columbia situation is judged to be tense enough for the State Guardsmen on duty to be doubled to a total strength of 1,000, 42 Negro prisoners who had been held in the Davidson County jail here, were moved back to Columbia at 4 p.m. March 1. This movement took place after two Negroes had been killed in the jail by state troopers Thursday afternoon, February 28.

White is working with Looby and Weaver, planning for the legal defense of all persons under charges.

Tues 3-5-46

DEFENSE FUND SOUGHT

"This is no ordinary case," White said. "A firsthand look at the situation reveals even more outrageous handling than was indicated in newspaper stories. The killing of two prisoners in the jail and the wounding of another indicates what the Negro citizens of the small community of Columbia are up against. Unless they receive outside aid, unless the country is aroused to condemn the kind of thing that took place in columbia, Negro citizens of small communities throughout the nation will be helpless.

"The NAACP intends to give the defendants complete and uncompromising legal defense, but because of the number involved and the broad issues, the fight will be an expensive one. We appeal for contributions to the defense of the Columbia, Tenn., victims from individuals and organizations throughout the country. Money should be sent to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York."

Tues 3-5-46

DOCTOR'S OFFICE DESTROYED

White said that there was deliberate vandalism by the militia sent in supposedly to keep order. The office of Dr. F. J. Hawthorne, at 106 East 8th Street in Columbia, was wrecked. The troopers went in and deliberately smashed all the furniture and equipment in the office of this respected physician. The office of a Negro insurance company across the street from Dr. Hawthorne was completely destroyed with its furniture broken and its files overturned.

White revealed that there is a plot now to place the responsibility for the rioting entirely on Negroes. Whites are claiming that Negroes have been plotting "an uprising" for about six months. It was also revealed that James Stephenson, son of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson who had the argument with the white radio repairman, is a Navy veteran, recently discharged. The repairman is also an ex-sailor.

R. S. Hopkins, a prominent and wealthy white lawyer in Nashville, was one of the persons who signed the bonds for the release of Julius, Charles, and Sol Blair, Cal Lockridge, and James Morton, all prominent Negro businessmen in Columbia. Other signers of bonds were Martin Payne, Julius Blair, and James Morton, all colored.

Columbia's Terror Victims

Pittsburgh Courier, Pa.

With commendable dispatch and efficiency born of thirty-seven years experience, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has swung its full machinery to the defense of the 100 colored citizens of Columbia, Tenn. who launguish in prison for the "crime" of defending themselves against lynch terror.

In scenes reminiscent of Nazi pre-war, anti-Jewish terror in Germany, these imprisoned Negroes saw their homes and businesses smashed, and were themselves threatened, fired upon and beaten by local police, State troopers and deputized mobbers at a time when this country is posing before the world as chief defender of freedom, equality and democracy. 3-30-46

The Columbia terror is a challenge to all freedom-loving Americans of all colors, classes and creeds, and the NAACP has launched a drive, headed by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Channing Tobias, to mobilize all forces of freedom and justice in this country to defend and liberate the unfortunate 100.

The association, with its hundreds of thousands of members, its 1,200 branches, its vast store of good-will and its eminent legal staff, is the organization best fitted to defend the 100 Columbians, and it is quite properly asking the freedom-loving citizens of this country to contribute the money needed for an adequate legal defense.

We are sure that there will be no hesitancy on the part of those eager to see justice done in this case in contributing liberally to the defense fund, and checks and money orders for this purpose should be sent immediately to the NAACP, 20 West Fortieth Street, New York 18, N. Y. Pittsburgh Courier, Pa

Such terrorism as that which swept Columbia, Tenn., in late February is a symbol of all that liberty-loving people of the world fought against in World War II, and for which millions gave their lives on scores of battlefields.

Unless this monstrous evil is crushed in this country once and for all, and an example made of uniformed mobbism, no American will be safe and liberty will be crushed in the one country most dedicated to its principles.

Saturday

We have contributed billions of dollars to free and to feed the other peoples of the world in the past five years.

3-30-46

Let us now contribute as liberally to the defense of liberty right here at home.

TENNESSEE TERROR: **Exclusive**

Negro Woman Victim Tells How It Started

Daily Worker
New York, N.Y.
Tues 3-12-46

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 11. — Two Negro friends took me by auto over several winding rural roads to a frame house in the Tennessee countryside to visit a brave little woman.

As we walked up a dirt path to where the house, almost hidden by birches and fruit trees, stood on high ground, two Negroes, on the alert for white strangers, came down to meet us. They had good reason to be on look-out. Less than two weeks before we came, white men, most of them in uniform of the State Highway Patrol and local police, made a violent attempt to lynch a 19-year-old Negro Navy war veteran and his mother.

Mrs. Gladys Stephenson is that mother. And we had come to the little frame house to visit her and hear her story of the fiendish acts of white men that rocked the town of Columbia for several days.

When the two Negroes on look-out recognized us as friends they greeted us warmly, took us around to the side of the house and through a door into the kitchen where two women were busy preparing a meal over the stove. They took us to a small parlor, crowded with furniture of both 19th and 20th centuries, and told us Mrs. Stephenson would be in in a minute.

One of the Negroes who drove up with us helped hide Mrs. Stephenson and her son several days before from the lynch-bent, armed white men. **He is now out of jail on $5,000 bail charged with attempt to murder. He is one of more than 30, mostly war veterans, to be brought before an all-white jury for resisting the attempted lynching with arms.**

Tues 3-12-46

Mrs. Stephenson, a slender woman not over five feet tall, threw her arms around the big kind-faced Negro man who had saved her. She shook my hand warmly. She smiled. But it was a sad, weary smile.

But there was fight in her voice when she sat up straight in a chair and recited in swift, clear sentences her experiences in Columbia Feb. 25.

She spoke with pride of her son Jimmy. He had come home a seaman first class after serving three years aboard the USS Prometheus in the great sea battles of the Pacific and the Philippins liberation campaign. Fearing his safety local Negroes induced him to go to Chicago where he is now living with relatives.

RADIOMAN CHEATS WOMAN

Mrs. Stephenson's story of the "trouble" on Columbia's Court House Square starts with events of a month before the town was turned into a mad frenzy. Then she and her youngest son John Robert Stephenson, 17, took a portable radio, battery and wall plug-in model, to the Caster-Knott shop in **the Columbia Square for repair. William Fleming, white radio re**pairman estimated price of the job from $8 to $10.

"A month later I called up from where I was doing housework for a white woman, Mr. Scales, and asked about the radio," Mrs. Stephenson said. "The radioman said he had put batteries in it and sold it to a customer for $17.50. He explained he sold all such property left in his store and not called for after 30 days."

Resenting this indignity, Mrs. Stephenson told Evelyn Sowel, white sister of her employer, about the situation. They both talked to the radio man by phone. He demanded Mrs. Stephenson pay $17.50 and said he would get the radio from the purchaser. After both women argued with him he agreed to return to radio minus batteries for $13.75.

"Then I sent my two boys with $13.75 to get the radio and I went to work," said Mrs. Stephenson. "They went and got it and it wouldn't play. There was no cord on it to attach it to the wall socket. My mother looked it over and I brought it to the house where I worked. The white lady I worked for said 'That's awful, I'm going to talk to Fleming.'

"The lady I worked for talked on the phone to him and told him to put a cord in the radio so it could **play."**

TENNESSEE TERROR:

Negro Vet's Own Story

Daily Worker

New York, N.Y.

By CARL HIRSCH

Fri. 3-15-46

CHICAGO, March 14. — Young James C. Stephenson, central figure of the Columbia, Tenn., atrocities, told his story here today in an exclusive interview with the Daily Worker.

50

The 19-year-old Negro Navy veteran who attempted to protect his mother and himself from the attack of a white man quietly recounted the tragic train of events which led to an avalanche of barbaric destruction upon the whole Negro section of the southern town.

Stephenson, a seaman for three years, is still stiff and bruised as a result of his fierce encounter with white men Feb. 25.

Rushed from Columbia on the night of the incident by his friends, boyish, good-looking Jimmy Stephenson learned only through newspaper accounts of the pogrom that gripped his home town soon after his departure. Fri. 3-15-46

Slight in build, serious in mien, he spoke in low, sometimes tense, voice.

"I knew long before I came back from the Navy that things like this were bound to happen," he said quietly. "Maybe it will wake a lot of people up.

"You see, on my ship the fellows used to read in the papers about what was happening to the Negroes back home, and how Negro GIs were being treated in the South. We all knew that we weren't going to stand for it any more, and there were going to be some changes made.

"All the vets I knew, Army and Navy, talked about the South, and they felt just like I do about it. We weren't looking for trouble, but we weren't going to take any nonsense any more.

"The two fellows who were shot to death in the jail, down in Columbia, they were both pals of mine, William Gordon and 'Digger' Johnson. Gordon's sister was my girl.

Jimmie was born in Columbia, and lived there most of his life, until he joined the Navy in 1943.

"We always had to struggle to get along down there. Even when I was a kid I hated it. I'd been to New York and Chicago on vacations, and when I went into the Navy I decided that I would never go back to Columbia. Fri. 3.15.

"I planned to go to New York, to study to be an athletic instructor. I went into the Navy Jan. 11, 1943, and got boot training at Great Lakes, Ill.

"From there we were sent to California, and then to the South Pacific for 21 months. I was with Base Co. 1 Supply Depot at New Caledonia, Guam, Guadalcanal, and was in two major battles during that time.

"Then, we went back to San Francisco, and after 30 days leave, shipped out again to the Pacific. We took part in two more major Naval battles. I was released last January.

"After spending two weeks in Chicago with my father I went to Columbia, to visit my mother.

What happened in Columbia is history. While I was there I interviewed many local people, and from all investigations the story comes out pretty clearly:

Stephenson and his mother had a dispute with a clerk in the Castner-Knott electric shop. Someone there had attempted to cheat them in connection with a radio that Mrs. Stephenson had left there for repair.

As Stephenson and his mother left the shop, someone struck his mother and Stephenson almost simultaneously. Soon they were defending themselves desperately against half a dozen men who attacked them.

The police came—and following Columbia practice arrested Stephenson and his mother, let their attackers go. At the jail they were held in $3,500 bail, which friends put up. No formal charge was entered.

Stephenson's friends heard of plans to lynch him, persuaded him to leave the city. They thought the lynchers would forego their attack if their victim were not there. The story of Columbia shows what happened instead.

WORRIES ABOUT MOTHER

Young Stephenson is very tired and very worried about his mother, who is in Columbia. He has received only indirect word that she is safe.

He knows his and his mother's case will be before the grand jury sometime this month, but he doesn't know what the charges against him are. Fri. 15-46

James C. Stephenson Sr. is also a veteran of this war. He served in the U. S. Army for three and a half years with an advanced communication corps. He saw action in Normandy, Northern France, Central Europe, and the Rhineland. He was discharged Nov. 27, 1945.

"I felt tense and helpless, when I heard what was happening to members of my family and my friends in Columbia," he told the Daily Worker. **"But I'm very proud of my son."**

Mrs. Stephenson then explained how on Monday, Feb. 25 she, accompanied by Jimmy, went to the Caster-Knott store to talk to the manager. She was told he was in Nashville. She went up a few steps into the radio repair room. Jimmy waited at the foot of the steps. Fleming told her he had "plenty of trouble" with the radio. She quoted the manager as saying a cord would be installed in it. One of the repairmen threw a cord in the box and without attaching it, according to Mrs. Stephenson, said:

"That could be fixed for four or five more dollars."

"I said I could not pay the money," continued Mrs. Stephenson. "I put the cord in the box. Just then a white fellow came in and complained about bad work on his radio. Tues 3-12-46

"I then turned to my boy down the steps and said: 'I know what I'l do with this radio. I'll take it to another shop.'

"One of the radio men hit me from behind. Fleming hit Jimmy. The two white men hit me again and tore the sleeves out of my coat. (She went and got the coat and showed it to us in three pieces).

"Then I was knocked down. A man in an army jacket kicked me. I heard Jimmy hit Mr. Fleming. But I did not see it. Fleming fell through a glass window. They say he was cut. Men were beating Jimmy.

"I got up and rushed across the street to Stephenson's Drug Store

DEMMY—MARCH 11

and asked the white folks to call the police. They were trying to kill my son.

"I went back across the street. There was Chief of Police Walter Griffin hitting my son with a stick. Another policeman, Sam Richardson, hit me. Will Wilfred, another policeman, hit me. They put us in a car and took us to the police station.

"The Chief asked Jimmy his name and 'who is that gal with you.'"

"That's my mother, Chief," Mrs. Stephenson quoted her son as saying. She reconstructed the rest of the conversation

"Boy, don't you have a knife?" the Chief asked.

"No," Jimmy replied. "Who got cut?"

"Fleming," the Chief declared.

"I didn't cut him," said Jimmy. "I hit him with my fist."

The Chief, according to Mrs. Stephenson, said he guessed Fleming got cut with window glass. He took them into another room "where a man was writing."

"The man who was writing asked us if we were guilty of fighting," Mrs. Stephenson declared describing the Kangaroo trial. "We said yes. He said $50 and costs.

"Then they carried us to the big jail. Sheriff Underwood said there was 'quite a bit of talk' uptown (meaning a lynch mob was gathering).

"Mr. Solomon Blair, the colored barber, came to take us out. The Sheriff said he shouldn't do it. But Sol said we must leave the jail. And instead of asking for the $50 fine they made Mr. Blair put up $3,500 bail for each of us. Our friends took us away and hid us while the mob was forming on the square."

Mrs. Stephenson said she struck back and so did Jimmy when Fleming and the others attacked her. Tues 3-12-46

"Yes, I was fighting," she said. "I was so scared they were going to kill my boy."

These events were followed by a police raid that night into the Negro business section. They were turned back with six receiving slight buck shot and bird shot wounds, giving Jimmy and his mother time to flee. Highway patrolmen, with Flo Fleming, brother of the radioman, in the lead roared into the district before dawn Tuesday machine-gunning, wrecking and looting all places of Negro business and leaving a huge KKK inscribed on a casket in a Negro undertaking parlor.

After arresting more than 100 the patrolmen shot two Negroes to death in the county jail. Today the terror continues—a more quiet terror—leading to a gigantic planned frameup of at least 30 colored citizens of this town.

More Disturbing

Birmingham News

The situation in Columbia, Tenn., has been made worse by the shooting to death of two Negroes while held in jail. The prisoners were taken into custody for questioning in connection with earlier racial disorders which have brought out the State Guard. One of the Negroes, it is said, seized a gun which had been taken by authorities in a house-to-house search two days before.

There are a number of unanswered questions in regard to the shooting. Why were the guns left out where a prisoner could reach them? How did the prisoners get ammunition? What made the prisoners so desperate that, while inside a jail, surrounded by white officers, they would try to shoot it out with the police? 3-2-46

The underlying racial tension in this country is only aggravated by such a deplorable development. The work of authorities in the Tennessee city in restoring balance and sanity is made more difficult. They can succeed, and of course it is unthinkable that the good sense of people will not reassert itself in time. But in the meanwhile, the situation demands the utmost of forbearance, self-control and understanding. Sat.

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23 May Face Second Trial

PM

New York, N.Y. Mon.

The prosecution still may take further trial action against the 23 Negroes acquitted at Lawrenceburg, Tenn., by an all-white jury on charges of attempted murder during the racial disorders at Columbia last Friday.

Prosecution plans possibly will not be divulged pending argument on Oct. 18 on defense motion for a new trial for Robert Gentry and John McKivens, the only two convicted on the attempted murder charge. 10-7-46

Walter White, executive secretary of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, welcomed the acquittal of the 23 as indicating that "American justice has triumphed over the Klan." He pointed out, however, that seven other Negroes, along with the 23 acquitted, will face possible trial on other indictments, including the posession of firearms. "A great victory has been won," he said, "but the fight is not yet over."

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

KILLING OF NEGROES IS PROTESTED HERE

New York Times

NAACP Tells Truman Shooting of 2 by Tennessee Troopers in Jail Was Worthy of Nazis

Sat. 3-2-46

New York, N.Y.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Willkie Memorial Building, 20 West Fortieth Street, charged yesterday through Thurgood Marshall, special counsel, that "the action of the Tennessee State troopers in roping off the Negro section of Columbia, Tenn., and firing at will and indiscriminately," in the racial disturbances last Monday "was closer to the action of the German storm troopers than any recent police action in this country, the South not excepted."

Mr. Marshall said that he viewed the killing of two Negroes in the Columbia city jail Thursday afternoon as "further example of lawlessness on the part of Tennessee law enforcement officers" and "an indication of the complete disregard of 'due process of law.' ". As matters now stand, he said, "No Negro in that area has the semblance of constitutional rights."

When informataion reached the association "from their attorney at Columbia," according to Mr. Marshall, a wire signed by Walter White, executive secretary of the association, was sent to President Truman informing him that "two Negroes being held in jail" following the disturbance on Tuesday "have been machine-gunned to death by State troopers."

"We have been in touch with Attorney General Tom Clark requesting action by the Department of Justice to safeguard civil rights of Negro citizens of Columbia only to learn that department has delegated matter to U. S. Attorney Horace Frierson in Nashville, who happens to be a native of Columbia," the telegram continued.

"Wanton Double Murder"

"We regard this wanton double murder in jail as inevitable outcome of failure of Federal authorities to impress local and State officials with rights guaranteed to citizens of the nation and to take steps to secure those rights. We call upon you as Chief Executive to use all powers available to the Federal Government in such a situation to the end that cold-blooded murder of citizens by State officers may not only be stopped but punished to full extent of the law.

"We submit that our Government cannot in decency sit idly by in these circumstances. We have appealed to Governor (Jim) McCord and to your Attorney General with the above result. You are the last dependence of citizens who stand helpless before guns in the hands of those sworn to protect their rights and to uphold law and order and the Constitution and laws of both Tennessee and the United States of America." Sat. 3-2-46

The association said that "most newspaper accounts omitted the events which started the trouble," and an account of "the visit of the mob to the jail, presumably to lynch a colored woman and her son." The trouble was said to have started "when William Fleming, a white radio repairman, slapped, struck or kicked Mrs. Gladys Stephenson about 11 A. M., Monday, Feb. 25, and was promptly knocked through a plate glass window by her son, James Stephenson." About 6 P. M. the mob visited the jail, and this alarmed Negro citizens, the association said.

Not Attacked by Whites

"The best information is that the white civilian mob did not attack Negroes, but the demonstration before the jail was sufficient to convince colored citizens that trouble was in the air," the association declared. "Four city policemen went into the Negro district which was fully convinced a lynching was about to be staged. The policemen were shot. This brought on the State troopers and the State guard, a total of 500 armed men in all."

Mr. Marshall said that Mr. White planned to leave yesterday for Nashville, forty-two miles from Columbia, and would remain there for the duration of the trouble. The NAACP is represented in Nashville by Z. Alexander Looby, member of the national legal committee, and in Chattanooga by Maurice Weaver, who procured the release on bail and transfer to Nashville of Mrs. Stephenson and her son, James.

The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, 205 East Forty-second Street, wired President Truman and Attorney General Clark asking for Federal intervention "to prevent further loss of life and infringement of civil liberties" in Columbia, it was announced yesterday by George Marshall, chairman of the federation.

The mesage said that the "killing of two Negroes in the Sheriff's office from among 101 thus far arrested" following the outbreak, demonstrated serious violation of Federal civil rights statutes by local officials." The federation reported that other civic, religious and educational bodies were joining in the demand for Federal intervention. Sat. 3-2-46

Faction Aroused By Rise In Race's Economic Level

St. Louis

Argus

Saint Louis, Mo.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 4—In explaining the undercurrent which was principally responsible for the outbreak of rioting in Columbia, Tenn., Jennings Perry, editor of the Nashville Tennessean, chairman of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax and author of "Democracy Begins at Home," had the following to say:

Friday

"A few whites in the cities manage to live in jittery fear of an 'uprising,' and look under their beds for it every night. These nurse all such fictions as the Eleanor clubs and Black Dragons. Their bible still is 'the leopards spots.' 3-9-46

"During this war (as the last one) you might hear some sparse talk of the necessity of 'putting the Negro in his place' when he puts off his uniform. Some returning white GIs recite this theme. It is noteworthy that the white mob that milled around at Columbia the other night was made up mainly of youths, one or two still in Navy or Army garb.

"The irritant of economic competition has naturally been present in a state in which until recently 'a dollar a day is a nigger's pay.' That is why it is mainly poor whites who take part in race demonstrations. In the cotton-producing end of the state a Negro's pay still is $2 to $2.50 per day. In industry the Negro has some protection from the minimum-wage law, but he cannot rise into management. In wartime, there were jobs for all. Only now is the white man beginning to eye askance the Negro worker at the bench.

"The race question has been here since the two races have. Nothing in our times has so edged it, perhaps, as the departure of Negro women from the white kitchens—some to the mills, some because their men were making enough to take care of them, some because allotments from sons and husbands in the service were more than they make in the kitchens. This has stirred quite a white fury on the distaff side.

"In these parts domestic service is exclusively a Negro province; even the poorest whites will not enter it, and there are no gentle German, Polish, Irish or Italian immigrants to fall back upon. White matrons, who have always had cooks and housekeepers at $4 to $8 a week, have been impatient waiting, some with anticipatory gloating; the war should be over and Mary or Anna would 'come begging back.' Mary and Anna, quite understandably, do not mean to go back to that if they can help it. This, I would say, is the worst fly in the ointment of race relations in Tennessee today. By far the greatest number, both of the white and the Negro people of Tennessee, are sane enough, even if they don't know just what to do about their ancient inherited problem.

"Despite the recent inexcusable nastiness at Columbia and the spot of loyal hysteria from which it proceeded, there has been nothing like a race 'riot' in Tennessee. I do not look for any here."

No Action Taken On Slaying Of 2 By State Cops

(By The Associated Negro Press)

Columbia, Tenn., March 27.—The Maury County Grand Jury was able to only name four whites in its indictments Friday for the racial flareup here on Feb. 25, while charges against 33 Negroes were made.

The four white men, charged with an attempt to commit a felony, were among the mob that came to the jail to demand custody of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James Stephenson Jr., following their clash with a white radio repairman. Two of the white men are Roy Scribner and Joe Williams, both under bond; the other two, not under bond, were not identified.

No action was taken on the slaying of two Negroes inside the county jail by police officers. The jury was convinced by statements from witnesses to the shootings that the prisoners were killed to frustrate a desperate attempt to break jail, said District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus, and that officers fired only after the two prisoners seized guns and wounded a deputy sheriff. Bumpus named Johnny Morgan, a photographer for the Nashville Banner, and Napoleon Stewart, an uninjured prisoner, as two of the witnesses that appeared before the grand jury.

Leaders Hit

An alanlysis of the grand jury's indictments reveal a distinct attempt to make an example of this city's Negro leaders. The most severe charges were leveled at them. Those indicted for accessories before the fact to attempted murder in the first degree are Sol Blair, Julius Blair, James Morton, Meade Johnson and James Thomas Bellanfant. Sat. 3-30-46

Those indicted for attempted murder in the first degree are James Morton, Sol Blair, Meade Johnson, Bellanfant, Tommy Baxter, Clarence Brown, Charles C. Edwards, Luther Edwards, Robert Gentry, Cal Lockridge, Webster Matthews, John Mckivens, Lewis Miles Jr., Paul Miles, Charley Smith and 10 others, unidentified, and said not under arrest.

Bumpus did not reveal the names of those indicted, all Negroes, but not yet under arrest. Of the total of 11 indictments, 26 Negroes were listed in the first indictment. The four white men were listed in the second indictment and the third charged William A. Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy with attempted murder in the first degree. The remaining eight indictments were directed at one person each, and carried mostly a charge of carrying concealed weapons.

The possibility of a quick trial for those named in the true bills was exploded by Judge Joe M. Ingram, who remarked that crowded dockets in the other three counties embraced by the judicial circuit will probably prevent immediate trials. Bumpus conceded that the trials may last many months and may even reach the Supreme Court of the United States.

Fair Trials

There will be no discrimination shown during the trials, Bumpus announced. "All of the persons indicted in connection with the recent disturbances will be regarded as citizens of the United States and entitled to all rights and privileges," he declared. "They will be prosecuted as accused law violators and not as representatives of any race, creed or religion."

Many national white and Negro organizations, including the N. A. A. C. P., have shown interest in the violence that terrorized 3,000 Negro citizens of this city on Feb. 25, have expressed a determination to bring the uniformed slayers of the two Negro prisoners to justice and are preparing to demand justice for those indicted.

FBI Agents Probe

At least six Federal Bureau of Investigation agents are said to have completed a probe into the circumstances that lead up to the riot, as well as facts on the riot itself. The FBI findings are said to have been already submitted to the federal grand jury, which ordinarily sits in Nashville, but may come here to hear riot witnesses.

United States Attorney General Tom Clark has expressed interest in the possibility that federal civil rights were violated during the rioting.

Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James Jr., are reported to be somewhere in the midwest. Stephenson appeared before a group of Chicago citizens a few weeks ago to give first hand details about how the riot started. The young veteran, who served 21 months in the navy, said he returned the blow only after the radio man struck him. He and his mother were en route to Nashville when the mob came to the jail for them.

Rising Riots

The Washington Post.

Several incidents in the news of the past few days serve to emphasize the delicate and highly combustible social situations that characterize this difficult transition from war to peace. One of these incidents was the little battle fought, happily without serious casualties, between the police and a small army of CIO strikers outside the General Electric plant in Philadelphia. Another was a race riot at Columbia, Tenn., which appears to have been checked while scarcely beyond the stage of incipience. The New York *Daily Worker,* which hurriedly dispatched two correspondents to the spot to make what capital of it they would, described the incident at Columbia as a "bloody invasion of the Negro community" by local and State police and the State militia; as for the disturbance in Philadelphia it is cited in that journal as another example of "cop terror" and "police brutality." Washington D.C.

Sat 3-2-46

It is time, however, to beware of these facile interpretations. In Philadelphia a court had enjoined the practice of mass picketing, and for two days the strikers had ignored the injunction. On Wednesday the acting sheriff made an effort to enforce it, assembling for the purpose a detail of nearly 1000 mounted, motorcycle and foot police. There appears to have been a conference between the sheriff and the leaders of the 600 demonstrating strikers, at which it was agreed that the strikers might parade once in full strength before the General Electric plant. But after the pickets had passed the plant, a command was given them to countermarch, and at this the mounted police rode into the column of pickets, swinging their clubs. From a loud speaker in a police car the sheriff read the Pennsylvania Riot Act, commanding the strikers to disperse. With some difficulty the police managed to clear the streets. On Thursday the disorders were renewed, and at this writing the issue of the conflict is undecided. Governor Martin of Pennsylvania has announced that he is ready, if requested, to order the famous State Constabulary into Philadelphia, and even the State Guard if necessary, for the preservation of the peace.

Here, obviously, is a situation that has got dangerously close to being out of hand. The question is not whether mass picketing is ever a justifiable weapon in labor disputes, a matter to be settled by legislative action. It is whether the legitimate authorities can cope successfully with this challenge. Local police systems, as we know them in this country, are not organized to wage intermittent war on rioters. They are organized on an assumption that in their work of preventing crime and preserving order they will have at least the passive cooperation of the vast majority of the citizens. If it is shown they can be intimidated in this instance, we may expect the violence and civil demoralization incident to these strikes to increase, and in the end perhaps the police themselves will be demoralized, which, indeed, may be the object of the demonstrators. Meanwhile, at a time when crime is on the increase, the police in Philadelphia and elsewhere have been diverted by the industrial conflict from their normal occupation of protecting the community against chronic lawbreakers. Sat. 3. 2-46

The circumstances attending the Columbia riot are more obscure. Many newspapers chose to ignore the story entirely, possibly on the ground that it might serve to aggravate the tensions already existing in other communities. The whole incident seems to have been touched off by some petty dispute about a radio between two Negroes, mother and son, and a white shopkeeper or shopkeeper's clerk. There was a scuffle of some kind and a plate glass window was smashed. The two Negroes were arrested and a crowd of other Negroes gathered in the public square in front of the courthouse to demand their release. The prisoners were, in fact, presently released on bail, but meantime numbers of white men and boys had also gathered in the square and there were excited and angry threats of lynching. The Negroes retired to their own quarter, known as the "Mink Side," and evidently barricaded themselves in their homes. Four local policemen entered the Negro quarter, for the purpose, they said, of assuring the inhabitants of protection. Someone fired at them and one officer was badly wounded, another slightly wounded. Throughout the night there seems to have been some sporadic shooting by both whites and Negroes, but there were few casualties. At daybreak Tennessee Guardsmen, arriving at Columbia, dispersed armed groups of young white civilians. Then they moved into the Negro quarter, and, after a little more shooting and a good many arrests, announced that the riot was over.

On the basis of these meager details it would appear that the local authorities forestalled possible lynchings and probable bloodshed by so promptly invoking the aid of the State Police and the militia, thereby displaying a degree of intelligence and decision that have not always been characteristic of the Southern officials in such situations. And this, no doubt, was a grievous disappointment to the *Daily Worker.*

CLARK'S ACT HAILED IN RACE ROW IN SOUTH

New York, N.Y.

The action of United States Attorney General Tom Clark in sending special investigators to Columbia, Tenn., in connection with the series of racial troubles that started Feb. 25, was viewed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People yesterday as "very significant, and indicative of a desire for more than a cursory investigation."

From the office of the association in the Willkie Building, 20 West Fortieth Street, Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel, gave the statement that he had talked with the Attorney General yesterday and had assured him that the association would give "its fullest cooperation." Mr. Marshall said that the association could furnish "witnesses, statements and pictures gathered in Columbia" by their own investigators, and held that they were "definite enough to clear up a lot of confusion about what happened" there. Sat 3-23-46

"An impartial investigation by a Federal grand jury is the first step toward the enforcement of statutes protecting civil rights of citizens. To send down a Washington staff will prevent charges of bias," he said. The United States Attorney at Nashville, Horace Frierson, is a native of Columbia, Mr. Marshall charged. "No matter how thorough and effective he is, there will always be criticism," he said.

Race Rioting Causes Arrest Of White Men

Courier-Journal
Louisville, Ky.
3-2-46

Columbia, Tenn., March 1 (AP)—District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus said tonight several white men had been arrested in connection with racial disorders here in which two Negroes were killed and 12 other persons wounded.

Bumpus declnied to say how many white men had been arrested or what charges had been preferred against them, but said, "We have some definite leads on some white people for inciting the Negroes." 3-2-46

He said he was continuing his investigation of the approximately 100 Negroes jailed since Monday on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with intent to commit murder.

"Some of the Negroes have been released outright and others have been released on bond," Bumpus declared. "Others will be released as soon as I've had an opportunity to investigate them." Sat.

Tenn. Rioting Ends; Troops Seize Weapons

Washington Post
D.C.

Columbia, Tenn., Feb. 26 (AP)—Militiamen and patrolmen searched residential sections this afternoon to prevent repetition of disorders which resulted in 70 arrests and wounding of 10 since last night.

The house-to-house search was order by State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar, who said order had been restored after Columbia spent a tense night punctuated by gunfire. 2-27-46

Mayor Eldridge Denham likewise said the situation was in hand and that lawlessness nad ceased.

Bomar directed 500 State militiamen and highway patrolmen to concentrate their hunt for weapons in "both Negro and white sections from where we think some of this trouble is emanating."

Variety of Weapons Seized

In the first hour of the search, the officers seized a variety of weapons, including a German machinegun and a Japanese rifle with bayonet — presumably souvenirs from the war. Shotguns also were found, along with a considerable quanity of ammunition.

Governor Jim McCord, who ordered the armed forces to Columbia, arrived this afternoon from Nashville. "We're gravely concerned over the maintenance of order and our forces will remain here as long at it is necessary to keep order," the Governor said.

Of the 70 arrested, 68 were Negroes who were held on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with attempt to commit murder. 2-27-46

Sheriff J. J. Underwood attributed the disturbance to high feeling engendered by an altercation yesterday involving a Negro woman, her son and a white radio repairman. Wednesday

Four Policemen Wounded

The sheriff called upon the Governor for the militia and a patrol last night after four of the city's policemen were wounded, one critically, by a shotgun blast on a street in the Negro section known as "Mink Slide." This section of the city in which Negro businesses are located had been blacked out earlier when the street lights were shattered by gunfire.

Shortly after midnight two white men were wounded when they ventured into Mink Slide. A Negro also was wounded.

At daybreak when patrolmen, led by Bomar moved into the militia-surrounded area three more Negroes were felled by tommy-guns of the patrolmen. There were unverified reports that at least one Negro was killed.

At the meeting of the militiamen and patrolmen at which he ordered the firearms search, Commissioner Bomar told the group: "It is your duty to protect both the colored and white races." He added:

"There is no doubt in my mind but that part of this was brought about by some whites under the influence of liquor. And some of the colored persons also have been under the influence of liquor."

More Disturbing

Birmingham News ala.

The situation in Columbia, Tenn., has been made worse by the shooting to death of two Negroes while held in jail. The prisoners were taken into custody for questioning in connection with earlier racial disorders which have brought out the State Guard. One of the Negroes, it is said, seized a gun which had been taken by authorities in a house-to-house search two days before.

There are a number of unanswered questions in regard to the shooting. Why were the guns left out where a prisoner could reach them? How did the prisoners get ammunition? What made the prisoners so desperate that, while inside a jail, surrounded by white officers, they would try to shoot it out with the police? Sat 3-2-46

The underlying racial tension in this country is only aggravated by such a deplorable development. The work of authorities in the Tennessee city in restoring balance and sanity is made more difficult. They can succeed, and of course it is unthinkable that the good sense of people will not reassert itself in time. But in the meanwhile, the situation demands the utmost of forbearance, self-control and understanding.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

A Lynch Mob, Then a White Jury

New-York

(Reprinted from late edition of yesterday's Worker.)

By ROBERT MINOR

Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 2.—The highest estimate yet made of the number of armed white civilians that gathered on the main street fringe of the Negro district, known as Mink Slide, at dawn Tuesday morning is the figure given by the Nashville Tennessean—50 men.

That was the morning national guardsmen and state highway police went in with blazing tommy-guns to riddle the homes of the people and to wreck two blocks of small business houses, to smash up Sol Blair's barber shop and James K. Morton's undertaking establishmen to make the Negro settlement uninhabitable, as the newspapers frankly say. Ny.

The 50 civilians with rifles never got up the courage to go into Mink Slide, except that a few are said to have gone in after the police. Mon. 3-4-46

On the night before, there had been a gathering on the square, probably about the same number. They stood around with rifles and pistols in full sight of the police while the police car was being gotten ready to go down into Mink Slide to get Jimmy Stevenson, the 19-year-old Negro navy veteran—for his own protection, the police said—and to bring him back to the vicinity of the square.

INCITE LYNCHING

Two men, whose names ought to be learned, tried to work up a bigger crowd and a march into the Negro community. These two orators were unsuccessful. The police car came back from Mink Slide with its four occupants wounded and without Jimmy Stevenson. The armed civilians stood around, listened to the harrangue of the two inciters, but did not move. Finally policemen came and arrested the two. They were jailed a few hours under the charge of "drunk and disorderly." They were not drunk. That is merely the name applied by the police to the offense of unsuccessfully attempting to lynch Negroes. The Negroes themselves, for instance, Mr. Morton and the Blair brothers, for the much more serious offense of refusing to be lynched, were jailed the next day for "felonious assault with intent to commit murder." It is openly stated in the press that the reason for arresting them was that they are leaders of the Negro community. Mon. 3-4-46

The failure of the two inciters to get a march into Mink Slide Monday night is being called "the two-man lynching."

That same evening another man came forward in the crowd on the public square to make a speech. He is John Fleming, the brother of the radio store employe, William Fleming, whose alleged slapping or kicking of Mrs. Stevenson is said to be the incident that started off the struggle, and who is now in a hospital as a result of cuts received from the glass of the window that Jimmy Stevenson knocked him trough after he slapped Jimmy's mother. A brother of these two, Flo Flemming, is a state highway policeman and Democratic Party nominee for sheriff.

John Fleming's speech to the armed men on the public square Tuesday night is, however, described by the press as intended to oppose any attempt at lynching. He is quoted by the Tennessean as saying, "Let well enough alone and don't stir up any more trouble."

Common talk is that a delegation of the Ku Klux Klan or a similar group from Detroit is in the city interviewing prominent persons. I do not know whether it is true.

The day of the outbreak, last Monday, was the day set some time ago for selection of a new grand jury. The selection of the 12 men who will decide all questions of indictment or refusal to indict has, therefore, proceeded during the upheaval and in full knowledge that the biggest business before the new grand jury would be the handling of these so-called riots, a series of events which now includes two murders.

With this conflict involving the Negro and white the chief business before the new grand jury, its composition has been made up solely of 12 white men. And so completely are official affairs in the hands of a ruling political group, that the forthcoming action of the grand jurors is being freely predicted.

There are to be no indictments of white persons. There will be no punishment of the murder of the two Negro youths Thursday. It is understood that a savage and wholesale effort to impose heavy prison sentences upon 25 to 50 Negroes will be made. It was in preparation of "evidence" for this purpose that the three Negro youths were being third-degreed yesterday when one is alleged to have become so desperate as to seize a policeman's weapon. Mon. 3-4-46

The grand jurymen, all white, who have been finally selected are: J. D. Stanfill, foreman, J. B. Beeson, James Covey Kannon, Amos Davidson, Clyde Lindsey, M. G. Hight, T. E. Prim, Norman Dale, Will Murphy, J. W. Crews, J. P. Gunnels and Haggard Howell.

TENNESSEE NEGROES JEOPARDIZE LIVES TO PREVENT ANOTHER LYNCHING

Northwest Enterprise

Seattle Washington Wed. 3-13-46

COLUMBIA, TENN.—With only ten persons injured, despite the greatest amount of gunfire ever heard in this little town, Tennessee and the nation are undoubtedly in a better light before the world than they would have been had not a group of colored men of Columbia jeopardized their lives and the lives of their familis and property to prevent another lyniching in Maury County. Whatever is to the outcome of the rials of a number of colored leaders, who were languishing in jail here Wednesday, the verdict of all unbiased persons who will have gotten the real facts that brought on the trouble which has been miscalled a "race riot," will be that the jailed colored leaders acted in self-defense, and had they been white men they would have been called alert and useful citizens, instead of being smeared as criminals. Wed. 3-13-46

There were about 70 colored men in jail Wednesday. Among them were such well known Columbians as James Morton, undertaker; Solomon Blair and his father, Julius Blair, owners of a drug store and other business places on Eighth Street, and Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist pastor. The understanding is that these leaders are to be charged with "attempted murder" and if convicted, will be sent to prison. Their indictment, if any, will be made by an all-white grand jury, because, despite what the Supreme Court of the United States has said, they have only all-white grand juries in Maury County. If they are brought to trial they will face an all-white petit jury and a full array of court officials, all of whom will be white.

The daily press associations and newspapers of this area have already given the white folks' side of the Columbia trouble. They have suppressed all of the facts that would lead an unbiased person to appreciate the harrassment of Columbia's colored people, both before and at the time of the flare-up on Monday and Monday night of this week.

Prior to Monday's trouble, colored Columbians were aware of two lynchings in or near Columbia in recent years, and for which not a single member of the mobs was brought to justice. The first of these two lynchings was in the heart of the city. It is said that for a year or so thereafter, one of the sights of Columbia was the courthouse from which the colored man was lynched, showing the rope with which he was hanged, dangling from a window.

The other lynching was that of a boy named Cordie Cheek, charged with molesting a white girl but who after being spirited to Nashville for safe keeping, was set free by grand jury action. Cordie, after being released from the Nashville jail, went to the home of a relative near Fisk University, and very shortly thereafter, members of a mob came to the home brandishing shotguns, took the boy away in a car and lynched him near Columbia. It is reported that there were some 500 persons in the mob. Nobody was ever convicted or tried for that brutal lynching. Wed 3.13.46

It was with these thoughts in mind that colored Columbians prepared to prevent the lynching of a mother and her son here this past week. The mother was Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, 37, and her son, James Stephenson, 19. On Monday the mother and son were in the Castner Knott store on Columbia's Public Square. There the mother had words with a white radio repairman in which she disputed his claim that the radio had been repaired. A fight ensued, resulting in the mother being beaten and knocked down. The boy and mother fought back, which resulted in the young white man being knocked through a glass window, and injured by the broken glass. Shortly thereafter, policemen came and arrested the mother and her son but did not arrest the white man, so the mother states. Mother and son were put in jail. Colored business leaders, fearing the mother and son would be taken out and lynched, got both out of jail on bond ,amounting to more than $3,000.

The fighting incident, and the fact that the mother and son had been released from jail, appear to have aroused a number of whites. Rev. Calvin Lockridge, colored Baptist pastor, testifies that he heard that a man had gone into a store to purchase a rope and had said they intended to lynch the Negroes in "Mink Slide," the colored business section of Columbia. When this threat got to the colored people of the section they went to their homes, got their guns and decided to defend themselves as best they could against mob violence. As a first precaution they put out all of the lights in their section of the town. Wed. 3-13-46

With their section blacked out and all of them excited over the expected visit of the mob, the nervousness of the colored citizens was intensified when some white men came through the section and fired guns, presumably to frighten the people of the community. Colored citizens say that these were the first shots fired—the shots by the white motorists. Later, four white policemen drove their car into the section and they were fired upon, presumably by some of the colored citizens. The report of colored persons is that it was not possible to tell the police from any other white persons.

It was after the officers had been shot that city and county officials called for help. One hundred highway patrolmen and about

500 members of the State Guard were rushed to Columbia promptly by Gov. Jim Nance McCord. These completely surrounded the colored business section but did not move in until after daybreak Tuesday morning. When they did go in they used their tommy guns with devastating effect, but succeeded only in wrecking about all of the business places in the area. No serious casualties resulted. Much property was damaged, and according to a relative of Julius Blair, drugstore owner, his soda fountain was wrecked and, when the smoke of the conflict had lifted, he was minus most of the money he had in the drug store.

After the highway patrolmen and militia had taken over the area, the sheriff appointed about 125 of them as his deputies and they were sent on a house-to-house search for firearms. It appears that very little consideration was given to that clause in the Constitution of the United States which protects a citizen from unerasonable search and seizure. There was no report of white homes being searched and their arms taken from them. Even white citizens who were seen roaming the streets with sawed off shotguns, reportedly were merely asked by authorities to go home and put them away.

On their visit to the home of Undertaker Morton, about 12 citizens were found. They were said to have had guns and officers claim to have found some liquor. Undertaker Morton appears to have been selected as a ringleader when the "unreasonable search and seizure" of his home was made. He was put in jail and kept all through Tuesday night. Nashville friends of the undertaker and other leaders made bond of $2,000 each for the jailed men. However, Columbia citizens had not released the men Wednesday afternoon. Wed - 3 - 13 - 46

When news of the Columbia trouble spread throughout the nation it was made much of in metropolitan daiiles, all of them taking the angle that Negroes had staged a riot. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People took prompt action in petitioning Gov. McCord for a fair administration of the law. U. S. Attorney General Clark was importuned to have District Attorney Horace Frierson make an investigation.

After all of the danger to lives and damage to property had taken place the mayor and highway patrol chief took commendable action to allay the trouble. They went about the city, and especially the colored section, with loud speakers assuring the people that ll was well and that the military men were in town to protect all citizens, regardless of race. It is believed that had this sort of broadcast been done at the very beginning of threatened hostilities there never would have been any shooting. Colored citizens breathed happily when it was made plain to them that they, too, would be protected by the large contingent of uniformed men sent to Columbia. They did not have such assurance when they observed that only colored homes were invaded in search of firearms, and when, out of 70 persons arrested, 63 were Negroes and only two were white. Wed - 3 - 13 - 46

Attorneys of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of both the Chattanooga and Nashville branches are understood to have been instructed to make a full investigation of the Columbia outbreak and to seek by every legal means to protect the colored citizens in their civil rights.

One phase of the affair, out of which unfair newspapers made much ado, was that colored newspapers, ministers and kin of Columbians sought to make telephone calls to the city and were thwarted in their effort. An investigation is to be made to find out if anybody in Columbia actually had the right to refuse to complete a regular long distance telephone call to Columbia customers of the Telephone System. In their eagerness to get messages through to colored persons in the city it was necessary to send telegrams, one attempted user of his telephone is saying.

Colored leaders in Columbia believe that had they not gotten Mrs. Stephenson and her son James out of jail promtply and also taken the precaution to arm and then black out the section in which they lived, those who boastfully stated that they were going to carry out a lynching might have done so. They did not believe that local authorities would prevent a lynching in 1946 any more than their predecessors did in other cases with which colored Columbians have been taunted for the past 15 years or more.

Race Riot Rocks Tennessee Town

The People's Voice

Sat 3-2-46

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Submerged racial tension here flared with cataclysmic suddenness Monday evening, when Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, had an altercation with a downtown shopkeeper. This town of 11,000 inhabitants was plunged into a bloody race war which lasted from about 8 pm until after 8 am Tuesday.

Negro citizens swarmed to the downtown district in defense of Mrs. Stephenson and her son and at 10:16 am Tuesday, PV learned that ten persons were wounded—4 policemen, 4 white townsmen and 2 Negroes. The state police have 100 men surrounding the Negro district and 400 additional State Guards are in the same area.

Over three score persons have been arrested and the armed guards are prepared to "protect" the Negro populace. Armed bands of white marauders rambled throughout the town with lynch threats on their lips.

The clash and reckless gun-play came as a complete surprise to the mayor, who avers that only last week whites and Negroes raised over $4,000 for a Negro school and race relations have been "most amiable."

A late flash revealed that 65 persons were arrested, all Negroes—twelve of them held on a charge of attempted murder. A veritable arsenal was picked up in the Negro district including 6 double barrelled shot guns, 9 single barrelled shot guns, 9 rifles, one German machine gun, several knives and many hundred rounds of ammunition.

The disorder started when Mrs. Stephenson and her son, James, allegedly pushed William Fleming, a radio repair man, through a plate glass window.

As PV went to press the disturbance was reported under control due to the coolness of Lynn Bomar, State Public Safety Director, who mounted a loudspeaker on the outskirts of the Negro district and said: **"We are going to give you the same protection we give them (the whites). There is going to be no more trouble. Everything is going to be O.K."** Sat 3-2-46

The entire Negro shopping district is closed. It is but 2 blocks long and is known as the "mink slide" district. The white shopping district is open, business as usual.

When the rioting started and the police swarmed into the "mink slide" district with pistols blazing, the Negroes barricaded themselves in stores and homes and returned fire. Four policemen were wounded. The police then sought cover until reinforcements could be mustered.

Challenge Indictment Of 31 Columbia Negroes

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Tues 4-9-46

By **ROBERT MINOR**

COLUMBIA, Tenn., April 8.—With U. S. investigators present, the indictment on which 31 Negro citizens of this community are being held as an aftermath of the lynch attack on their homes last February will be challenged here Wednesday in Circuit Court.

At that time Z. Alexander Loobie, Nashville Neegro attorney, and Maurice Weaver, white attorney of Chattanooga, acting for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, will attack the legality of the indictment handed up by the grand jury, from which, in violation of the Constitution, all Negroes were deliberately excluded.

Meantime, officials are wondering what will come of the United States investigation of civil rights violations. District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus, who obtained the indictment from the all-white grand jury, and Lynn Bomar, the state safety director, who personally directed the attack on the Negro community with machine guns, are obviously eager for assurances that the investigation will come to nothing.

Some such assurances are being volunteered unofficially, as for example, a recent article in the Washington Post, by a writer who hints that he bespeaks the view of United States Attorney General Tom Clark.

'SEGREGATES' VICTIMS

When the Washington Post's writer described the Columbia event as one in which **"two Negroes were killed and a dozen persons shot,"** the apparent use of "Negroes" and "persons" as contrasting terms might be purely an accident. It is unfortunate that it fits so curiously well into the spirit of everything else that the reporter had to say about Columbia upon leaving the

attorney general's office.

What he had to say is that it is **"doubtful that anybody can be sent to jail"** for the violation of civil rights in Columbia. Why?

He continues:

"This is not because no civil rights were violated, but because the minority group that was said to be oppressed was from the start active and aggressive." Tues 4-9-46

The Washington Post lies as to the source of the aggression. It uses every adroit device to get the reader to believe that the aggression was on the part of the Negroes.

It carefully omits to say that the Negroes were under rifle fire from white hoodlums long before a single Negro fired a shotgun at what appeared to be the approaching vanguard of the mob. But it strains the language to describe the small birdshot from the shotgun as "slugs." It omits to say that officers of the law fired only at Negroes and at no white man, but in some cases tolerated the carrying and firing of rifles by white civilians. In at least on case they told some whites to "go home and get your shotguns."

In short, the "liberal" newspaper of the nation's capital deliberately distorted history, and could not but have known that in doing so it contributes a frame-up and a possible long imprisonment of the honest and courageous leadership of a whole community.

IGNORES FACTS

Events happened quickly, tragically but heroically in Columbia. A white clerk couldn't allow Mrs. Stephenson, a Negro woman, to "talk back." So he beat her. Jimmy, her 19-year-old Navy vet, for 15 minutes fought off the three white men who attacked his mother.

Young Negroes, many veterans, armed themselves with shotguns and beat back a mob intent on lynching the mother and boy. Venegefully 500 state police and guardsmen shot up the Negro community, arrested its leaders. In the jail the cops killed two Negroes and wounded a third.

The **Post** had access to these facts. It preferred to peddle the police station lie. The courage of the Negro people is passed over with the following sporting event description, the police "also found a scrappy spirit and offers to fight it out with the white crowds."

All of which is by way of reassuring those who are trying to send Mrs. Stephenson and her brave son and 29 others to jail for up to 21 years that "it is doubtful" that any of those who perpetrated the frameup can be sent to jail for violating civil rights.

Nonetheless, the framers are nervous. They know they are only a little gang in the midst of a great sea of people, and that if the people speak up, the frame-up will be defeated.

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Where Is America's Conscience?

Daily Worker, New York, N.Y.

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party yesterday issued the following statement condemning the brutal murder of two Negroes and the terrorizing of the whole Columbia, Tenn., Negro community.

Sat. 3-2-46

A son—a Negro veteran—defends his mother against a brutal attack—and fascism, booted, spurred, grinning and armed to the teeth, moves in to level another Lidice—in the South, in Columbia, Tennessee.

Where is the conscience of America? Where is the hatred of fascism that sent our sons to fight and die in the war against Nazism?

Two Negroes have been murdered, 101 more are in a Southern jail—an American concentration camp—and face the peril of imminent lynching.

A whole Negro community has been cut off from the outside world and turned into a shambles—not by vigilantes, not by an anonymous mob, but by those sworn to protect the whole people, by the state militia, by the police themselves, in all the odor of legal sanctity.

And why? Because a son defended his mother? No! Because the ruling class is determined to smash the growing alliance of Negro and white, forged during and since the war, in the front lines, in the shops and on the picket lines, for such unity will impede, if not stop, its fascist-imperialist plans.

NO ACCIDENT

Tennessee is not an isolated incident. Sinve V-J Day eight cases, at least, are known of Negro soldiers being murdered. **("We'll teach you your place when you get home." the lynchers said.)**

During the steel strike, 400 Negroes were rounded up by the police in Buffalo, a directly provocative attack on the unity of Negro and white during the strike. And in Freeport, N. Y., two Negroes were murdered—coldly, eagerly—by a policeman, whose murderous act has been whitewashed by the courts, by the police.

All this is a pattern, rapidly revealing itself, of deliberate plans to smash, not diplomatically, but with violence and bloodshed, the increasing determination of Negro and white, to bind themselves together in bonds of steel, for the defense of their lives, living standards and liberties. Sat. 3-2-46

The attack in Tennessee is part and parcel of the mass layoffs of the Negro workers since the war's end; of the drive to wipe out the small gains made during the war in ending differentials between Negro and white in wage scales; of the filibuster against the FEPC; of the putting of Negro veterans back "in their place."

A WARNING

Tennessee is a warning that the attacks on the Negro people are attacks on the interests of all the people, Negro and white. It reveals in sharply etched outlines that the alliance of pro-fascist forces and Bourbon poll-taxers will stop at nothing in pushing their vile plans forward. It reveals that the foul forces of reaction are bent on stirring up everything rotten in America to divert attention from the main intent of their plans—to attack the economic security, the democratic liberties and the peace of our people, indeed of the world.

Now is the time to act!

Every individual, every trade union, every organization, church, fraternal, etc., must:

(1) Demand that the Governor of Tennessee release the 101 Negroes now in jail, and guarantee their safety.

(2) Demand that the Department of Justice investigate the murder and apprehend the murderers.

(3) Demand that the President of the United States instruct the Attorney General to take the necessary steps to facilitate the investigation and to ensure the protection of the Negro community.

(4) Demand the indemnification of the families of those who have been murdered, of those now in jail; of the property of Negro citizens which has been damaged.

(5) Demand the death penalty for the lynchers.

(6) Organize demonstrations everywhere against the brutality in Tennessee—and—in New York City—turn out in masses in support of the March 7 demonstration in Union Square against the Freeport murders.

Communists, above all, have the duty—which they will not and cannot shirk—to act immediately, to take the initiative themselves in rallying the organizations of the people to act. Sat. 3-2-46

Tomorrow is too late!

From the muted lips of the dead in Tennessee comes the call to the conscience of America to act now.

Now is the time to act!

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT, COMMUNIST PARTY

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER,
EUGENE DENNIS,
JOHN WILLIAMSON,
BOB THOMPSON.

Riot Town Citizen Says Negroes "Treated Nice"

Journal & Guide
Norfolk, Va.
Sat 3-16-46

Special to Journal and Guide

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—"We have always treated our Negroes nice, and they turn against us like this."

The statement was not made by a so-called liberal, by an American citizen who earnestly thinks in terms of human brotherhood, of making democracy in truth the ideal haven for all races and peoples. Rather, the hypocritical mounting came from anti-Negro, Gestapo-thinking Citizen Love, a white attorney of Columbia, Tenn., who with the assistance of highway patrolmen and Tennessee National guardsmen enacted America's first postwar bloody travesty on justice and human decency.

THE DRAMA "NICE"

In Act 1, scene 1, on Columbia's "nice treatment" of Negroes, a colored woman was kicked without discretion, in her face and abdomen and abused in vile language unfit even for the ears of a mongrel. Why? Because she chose to remove her radio from the possession of an extortionist and incompetent repairman.

But, bewails Love: "We have always treated our Negroes nice, and they turn against us like this."

Act 1, scene 3, portrays a white citizen in a local store purchasing rope. "What are you going to do with this rope?" asked the salesman. Said the customer: "We are going to hang some Negroes tonight."

And Columbia's guardian of the "law", Love says, "We have always treated our Negroes nice, and they turn against us like this."

Mrs. Stephenson, the maltreated woman and her son, a veteran, who protected his mother from a more serious beating, were both thrown into "jail." To add insult to physical injury, a $3500 bond was demanded for their release. What happened to William Fleming the attacker. He went free. According to Columbia's Nazi law this citizen had done no wrong

Love, whose name belies even the basic elements of the misnomer, cries: "We have always treated our Negroes nice, and they turn against us like this."

MINIATURE "BUGLE"

Act 2, scene 2, deputized white citizens, highway patrolmen and National Guardsmen ring miserable "Mink Slide" and under the guise of "protecting" oppressed colored citizens stage a one-sided "Battle of the Bulge." To make their intentions clear, these minions of the law, many of whom recently returned from fighting a war against Nazism, deliberately march in and commit acts of vandalism, wrecking the businesses of the two most prosperous Negroes in the town. And, according to reports from authentic sources, looted the stores.

But Citizen Love declares that "We have always treated our Negroes nice."

More than three-score Negroes were "jailed," but less than four whites. And to appease the sadistic desires of Columbia's Gestapo, two colored citizens were fatally shot by the law while in the clutches of the law.

"NICE HOMICIDES"

Columbia's hospital refused these dying men treatment, so off they were taken to Nashville, 43 miles away. They died enroute.

Even the riot-torn town's lynching record utterly destroys the purported fair play towards colored citizens. Sat 3-16-46

Yet, Love has the brazen effrontery to utter the ironical: "We have always treated our Negroes nice, and they turn against us like this."

LYNCHING ATTEMPT CAUSED OUTBREAK

Pittsburg Courier
Pittsburg, Pa.

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Heretofore unpublished incidents taking place during the Feb. 25-26 race riot that saw two colored prisoners shot to death in the county jail were made known this week. Before returning to New York, the NAACP's Walter White said that "there was indication that patrolmen and State militia members had stolen property because while all civilians were barred from the Negro area, the business establishment of Julius Blair (prominent Negro) which had no persons in it, had had the lock shot from the wall, the juke box wrecked, cloth cut from the billiard tables, all cigars and cigarettes removed, as well as all ice cream." Sat 3-2-46

PRISONERS MISTREATED

Another revealing statement came from Clark Foreman, president of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. In an appeal to the Governor and people of Tennessee, he pointed out that an armed white mob of fifty or seventy-five persons stormed the jail here determined to lynch a colored woman and her son and that only two of the white men were arrested and later given light fines for being drunk; that armed bands of white men roamed the streets the night of Feb. 25, forcing Negroes to barricade themselves in their homes; that shots were fired into the "Mink Slide" area from cars driving by on the adjoining street; that arrested Negroes were mistreated, and that Negro business establishments were wrecked by officers.

ALL PRISONERS RELEASED

All of the 101 Negroes arrested in connection with the riot had been released Thursday of last week, either outright or on bond, Sheriff J. J. Underwood said. He admitted that Attorneys Z. A. Looby and Maurice Weaver of the NAACP had assisted in bringing about the release of most of the prisoners.

He said bonds for the prisoners were made possible by colored citizens of Columbia. Charges against the defendants range from assault with intent to commit murder to carrying arms.

The sheriff and District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus said officers are still busy accumulating data and evidence, which they declared would result in additional arrests.

MORE ARRESTS DUE

"We want to be sure of our facts before we make any charges," they said, "but you can be sure there'll be more arrests. They may come tomorrow, or it may be next week."

They made no statements, however, concerning the officers guilty of killing two prisoners in the county jail. Neither did they mention white men who stormed the jail in a lynch attempt, nor those who fired on Negro homes.

FBI INVESTIGATING

Members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrived on the scene last week and lost no time in launching an investigation.

U. S. Attorney General Tom Clark had the Columbia riot placed squarely before him when a committee representing the National Lawyer's Guild conferred with him and gave him the full picture.

Among those calling on the Attorney General were Martin Pepper, national secretary; Judge William Hastie, national vice president; Eugene Cotton, representing Lee Pressman, general counsel, CIO; Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP and Samuel Neuburger of the Constitutional Liberties Committee.

CLIMAX OF SERIES OF EVENTS Sat 3.16-46

The committee made the point that the Columbia disturbance was the climax of a series of events of similar nature and of which it was the most serious since the end of the war. They said it required action by the Attorney General himself or someone else of national stature.

The committee recommended that either Attorney General Clark or a nationally known member of the Department of Justice staff, such as Wendell Burge, be assigned to take full charge of the investigation, and that the Department determine any and all violations of the civil rights statues, and move immediately to prosecute if such violations are found, and that it make public the result of such an inquiry.

ANNOUNCES DEFENSE PLANS

In a statement to the press, Walter White announced plans for a defense of all Negroes who were arrested. He said every pressure would be brought to bear to secure the arrest and conviction of the real culprits and mob members who stormed the jail, and the State highway patrolmen and militiamen who violated the Constitutional rights of citizens.

The Grand Jury is now in session and is expected to consider the riot cases at this sitting.

Mr. White revealed that efforts of Attorneys Looby and Weaver to secure the release of Negro prisoners were blocked at first by authorities who refused to give out any information. Later when the attorneys began filing writs of habeas corpus, Mr. White said, the authorities released information and began releasing prisoners, announcing that writs were "unnecessary."

MARSHALL TO COLUMBIA

Mr. White said Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel of the NAACP, will go to Tennessee to arrange for the defense after he has finished with a Supreme Court case in Washington, D. C.

He also revealed that Bayard Tarpley, secretary to Governor McCord, and Governor McCord himself, boasted of tapping the telephone wires on all calls to and from the Negro district of Columbia during the riot.

Mr. White denied the report carried in some newspapers and over some radio stations that he had approved of the manner in which State and local authorities had handled the riot.

RAISE OBJECTIONS

Mr. White, like members of the Lawyers' Guild, objected to U. S. Attorney Horace Frierson, located in Nashville and a native of Columbia, and James Ruffin, an assistant attorney general and native Tennesseean. Ruffin was sent here to work on the case under the supervision of Attorney Frierson.

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare called on Governor McCord and State law enforcement officers to:

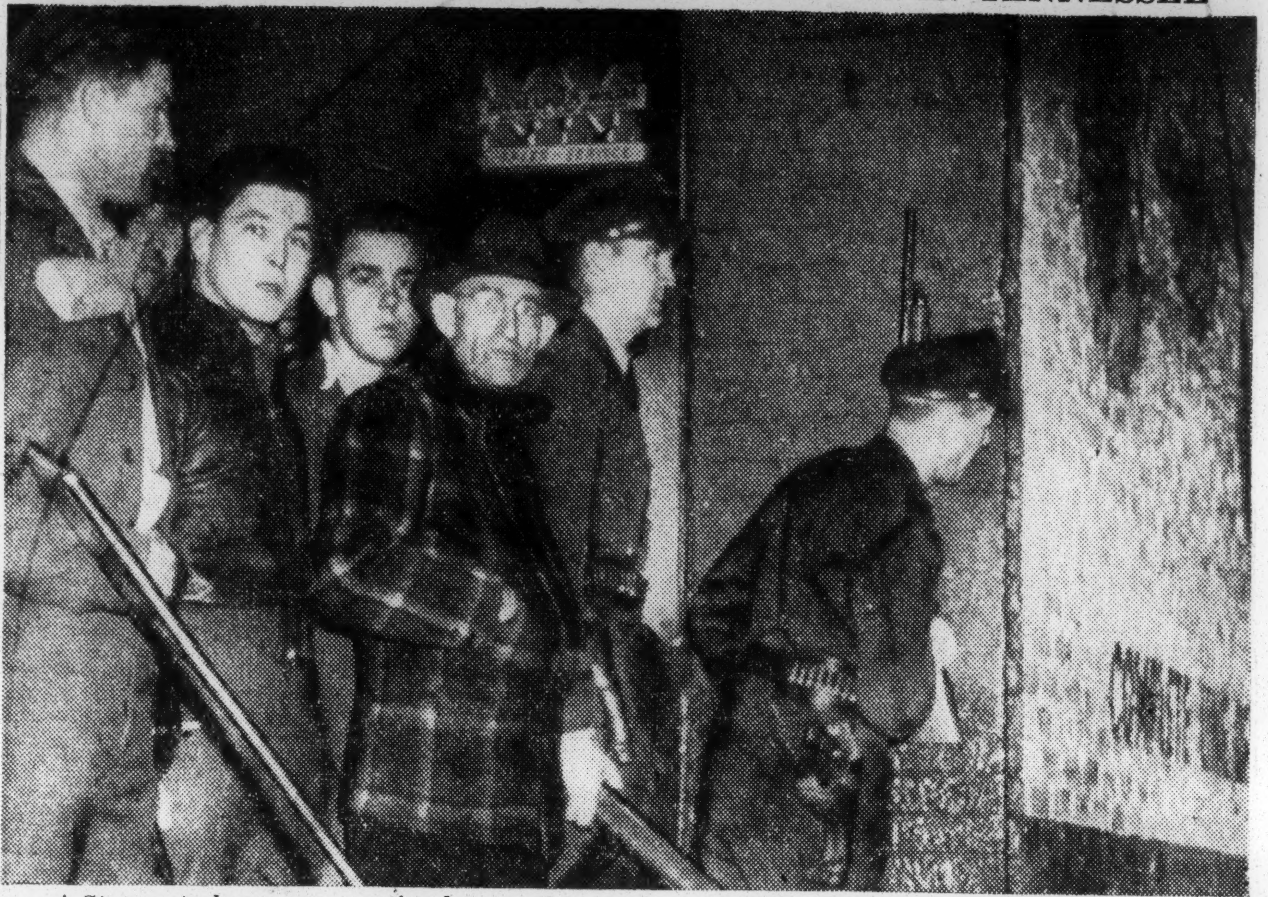
1. Prosecute members of the white mob who stormed the jail in an effort to lynch a Negro couple. Sat 3-16-46
2. Prosecute the officers responsible for the deaths of two prisoners in their custody.
3. Guarantee to those charged with crime a fair trial in the American spirit and tradition, with all rights provided by the U. S. Constitution.

The SCHW pointed out to the Governor that trouble started when a white radio repairman insulted and attacked Mrs. Gladys Stevenson. Her son, James, 19, protected his mother and charged the white man. Later bystanders attacked both mother and son. It was while the couple was in jail that wild lynching rumors were circulated.

Fearing that there might be an attempted lynching because of high racial tension in the town, Negroes armed and barricaded themselves in their homes.

Investigations up to this point show that the Negroes were forced to defend themselves. At times when they returned gunfire, they were not aware that the white men were officers, witnesses told The Courier.

ON THE ALERT DURING STREET FIGHTING IN TENNESSEE



A State patrolman peers cautiously around a corner of a building at the height of the rioting in Columbia on Monday night.

Associated Press Wirephoto

DISORDERS HALTED IN TENNESSEE CITY

New York Times

Militia Hunts Firearms in White and Negro Areas of Columbia—10 Wounded

2-27-46 Wed.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 26 (AP)—Five hundred State militiamen and highway patrolmen began a house-to-house search for firearms in some white and Negro residential areas this afternoon in a move to prevent repetition of violent disorders which have resulted in wounding of ten persons and seventy arrests since last night.

The search was ordered by Lynn Bomar, State Safety Commissioner, who said order had been restored after a tense night punctuated by gunfire. Mayor Eldridge Denham likewise said that the situation was in hand. 2-27-46

In the first hour of the search the officers seized a variety of weapons, including a German machinegun and a Japanese rifle with bayonet, presumably souvenirs from the war. Shotguns were seized and much ammunition.

Gov. Jim McCord, who ordered the armed forces to Columbia, arrived this afternoon from Nashville. 2-27-46

"We're gravely concerned over the maintenance of order and our forces will remain here as long as it is necessary to keep order," he said. N.Y. New York

Of the seventy arrested sixty-eight were Negroes who were held on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with attempt to commit murder. Paul F. Bumpus, District Attorney, said that the cases would be presented the Maury County grand jury immediately. Columbia is the county seat.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood, who sent the call for State aid, attributed the disturbance to high feeling engendered by an altercation yesterday in which a Negro woman and her son pushed a white radio repairman through a window and the subsequent wounding of four policemen who went into the Negro section known as Mink Slide.

The policemen, half of the city's force, were felled by a shot-gun blast. Patrolman Will Wilsford, 60, was wounded critically. Mink Slide had been blacked out earlier when the street lights were shattered by gunfire.

Early today two white men were wounded when they ventured into Mink Slide. A Negro also was wounded.

At daybreak patrolmen led by Mr. Bomar moved into the militia-surrounded area and three Negroes were felled by tommy guns of the patrolmen. There were unverified reports that at least one Negro was killed. 2-27-46

Authorities checked incoming long distance telephone calls which, they said, were intended for Negro leaders. A highway patrol official stated that several calls were to A. J. Morton & Son Funeral Home, some calls coming from Columbus, Ga.; Chicago and Nashville.

Morton was one of twelve Negroes arrested at the funeral home eaarly today after patrolmen had been fired upon from a dance hall across the street. In the possession of the twelve, Mr. Bomar declared, were four shotguns, two rifles and a pistol.

This is a dry county, but Mr. Bomar stated: 2-27-46

"There is no doubt in my mind that part of this was brought about by some whites under the influence of liquor and some of the colored persons also have been under the influence of liquor."

Mayor Denhay, in a proclamation this afternoon, called on "all citizens of all races to refrain from congregating."

In New York, Walter White, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said he had telegraphed Attorney General Tom Clark in Washington asking that the Department of Justice "act promptly and vigorously to safeguard constitutional rights of Negroes against State violation of those rights." 2-27-46

He said that he had also sent an appeal to Governor McCord.

Fear Lynching In Missouri

Daily Worker
New York, N.Y.

COLUMBIA, Mo., March 1.—The threat of a lynching hung over this town late today.

Police had arrested Floyd Cochran, 34, Negro garbage collector, and charged him with the murder of white Marylou Jenkins, 20. Immediately after arraignment he was spirited out of Columbia allegedly to an undisclosed jail. Sat 3-2-46

Cochran, according to State Superintendent of Police Col. Hugh Waggoner, has confessed to the slaying. Authorities speculated publicly on the probability of mob violence.

$900 Given for 'Riot' Defense During Mass Meeting in Detroit

Afro American
Baltimore Md.

DETROIT—Over $900 was donoted to the defense fund for the Columbia riot victims on March 21, following an address by Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, during a mass meeting at Ebenezer AME Church. 3-30-46

In addition to hearing Mr. White's firsthand account of his investigation in the Tennessee town, the nearly 3,000 persons present heard Mrs. Gladys Stephenson describe the attack upon her and her son, the incident which admittedly set off the riot.

Charging that the State and city police officers violated their trust by looting and destroying the businesses, Mr. White declared that full justice must be done to avoid any similar occurrence elsewhere.

Investigation Promised

The NAACP executive revealed further that he had been promised a full investigation by Attorney General Tom Clark and that the organization expects to hold a conference with the President on the issue this week. 3.30.46

Introduced by Mr. White, Mrs. Stephenson revealed in detail the incidents leading up to the attack by the two radio repairmen outside their shop. Mr. White was introduced by Dr. James J. McClendon, past president of the branch.

How 'Protection' Was Given

Afro American
Baltimore, Md.

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Sworn to uphold the law and to guarantee equal protection to all citizens, members of the State Highway Patrol and of the State Guard gave to the colored citizens of this city protection comparable to that given by the Gestapo to the Jews, Poles and all others against the Nazi regime in Germany and occupied towns.

Not only did they terrorize the people, viciously beating the men, women and youths who protested against their tactics, but they also demolished their businesses, leaving no vestiges of long-established enterprises. Sat 3-23-46

All Files and Records Destroyed

In the branch office of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, the "law enforcement" officers destroyed all records and files, even as they did in the office of Dr. Hawthorne, whose instruments and equipment were demolished. In other local establishments, including the poolroom and the barber shop, they splintered the tables and chairs and confiscated all money and other valuables.

Perhaps the most destructive of their acts were those perpetrated on the Morton Funeral Home, where they not only mutilated the caskets and broke lights, chandeliers and cabinets, but also left the threat of the Ku Klux Klan, whose initials "KKK" they marked with white powder on a navy blue casket.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

He Defended His Mother

~~Black Dispatch Oklahoma City,~~

Despite failure of daily newspapers to share with the general public the violence and lawlessness immediately preceding the riots at Columbia, Tennessee, detailing and describing the vicious and unlawful conduct of a white radio repairman before the son of a mistreated black mother, crashed the white ruffian through a plateglass window, the Black Dispatch and the general public now have that information, and while millions of whites will be left to assume a bullying young returning Negro GI was unjustifiably responsible for the breaking down of law and order, Negro newspapers will finally be able to present an adequate, comprehensive story to its readers. Sat 3-16-46

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But even though Negro publications will be able to present a fairly accurate picture of what actually happened in a radio repair shop in Columbia, nothing that is now said can return life to the bodies of two dead black men, succor the wounded, or replace the huge damage done by vandals to the business property and home life of the blacks in Columbia. Negro newspapers will now be able to present information which should have instantly become the property and information of the law enforcing agencies in the Columbia area, and we join with the Southern Conference for Human Welfare in asking:

Tenn

Civilian

1. Prosecute the members of the white mob who stormed the jail on February 25.
2. Prosecute the officers responsible for the deaths of two prisoners in their custody.
3. Release all prisoners who have not been charged with any crime.
4. Guarantee to those who are charged with crime a fair trial in the American spirit and tradition, with all rights provided by the United States Constitution, and unmarred with any manifestation of the lynch spirit which has brought about this horrible situation.

The facts assembled by the Memphis World, which sent a correspondent directly to the scene, show that effort was being made by a radio firm in Columbia to improperly maneuver a Negro woman out of a radio sent there for repair, and that the black woman had told the white lady for whom she worked about her trouble, whereupon the white lady had called the radio man, telling him to deliver the machine to Mrs. Stephenson. The record shows that Mrs. Stephenson paid the man, secured the machine and that the repairman then followed her into the street and struck her. How much different it would have been had white newspapers told this story to millions of readers! How could there be sanction in the heart of any justice-loving person who knowing the facts would agree that a mob should attempt to lynch a youth who struck another man physically attacking his mother?

The racial morbidity of the Columbia community is fully exposed when it is pointed out that two lynchings have previously occurred there, and that the unwritten law of the section admits of no exception, justifying a black man striking a white—not even in the defense of his mother. Cowardly mobs always seek succor and refuge in the atmosphere of terrorism. Wherever the lyncher reigns the blacks must be taught the inviolability of white people.

In order that our readers may know the facts about the Columbia riots, we publish below a statement assembled by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, with offices located forty miles from Columbia, at Nashville. This information was not assembled by Negroes, but by Southern white men who believe in justice and fair play, and who desire to see democracy taken out the ritual here in America. It follows:

James C. Stephenson, a young Negro veteran just returned from serving his country in the Navy, entered a radio repair shop on the public square with his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, on Monday, February 25. An argument with the white repairman ensued, in which Mrs. Stephenson was insulted and, according to witnesses, struck by the repairman. The young veteran sprang to the defense of his mother and there was a scuffle, in which the white man was slightly hurt. Both mother and son were then cruelly beaten by bystanders, after which they were arrested.

Late that afternoon, an armed white mob, described by the sheriff as from 50 to 75 persons, stormed the jail with the avowed intention of lynching the Stephensons. We are informed that only two members of this mob were arrested and that these two were released after paying a small fine for "drunkenness." Sat 3-16-46

It was believed by both whites and Negroes that there would be a lynching that night. The Negroes assembled together out of terror for their lives and determination not to be taken by the mob. For their own safety, the Negroes turned out the lights in the area.

A carload of whites drove into the Negro area. Shots were fired. There was no indication that the occupants of the car were officers. The Negroes were acting as any other group would have acted in the same circumstances, to defend their homes and lives against immediate peril of mob violence.

That night a cordon of deputies, state highway patrolmen and state guards surrounded the Negro section. At dawn, they invaded the area and came in shooting. There were indiscriminate mass arrests of 68 Negroes, without regard to their connection or lack of connection with the shots fired at the officers. These arrests were accompanied by brutal maltreatment of the prisoners and a completely unnecessary and purely vengeful vandalism, in which Negro business establishments were wrecked by the officers. The arrests have since grown to 100.

Foolish And Inexcusable

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

Merely because of the foolish and inexcusable explosion of tempers which touched off a race riot at Columbia, Tenn. last Monday, is no good reason to suppose that racial tensions in the South are growing more pronounced. In fact we rather agree with the views expressed by Dr. R. L. Russell in Atlanta a week ago, when on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Georgia Interracial Commission, he said race relations, both in Atlanta and the South, are definitely improving and that Negro and white leaders are more and more understanding their common problems and opportunities.

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Tues 3-5-46

That the Tennessee program could have been prevented, requires no argument for proof. According to the best reports we have been able to gather, the trouble is alleged to have been begun when Mrs. Gladys Stevenson, a Negro house maid, accompanied by her 19 year-old son, a veteran of three years overseas' duty went to a local radio repair shop to reclaim a radio belonging to her. Accounts say that the white Manager of the shop had misplaced or sold the radio, but offered some arbitrary sum in payment. From this, a hot exchange of words is said to have taken place; then threats, then blows, followed by beatings and arrests and more beatings. Finally, wild rumors made the rounds in both the Negro and white neighborhoods, resulting into an inexcusable and shameful riot, which only a little common sense could have prevented.

Civilian

Tenn

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, will, we presume, leave no stones unturned in seeking out the minutest details leading to the clash and thus fix squarely upon the shoulders of the guilty ones, due blame and punishment. It can hardly afford to do otherwise. For this is a very inopportune time for such a thing to happen, when the eyes of the United Nations are riveted upon our every act, toward them. America, to be the seat of the United Nations Organization, must capture the imagination and win the confidence of colored peoples the greatest majority of whom make up the membership of the United Nations Organization. Race riots, lynchings, unfair economic and political practices cannot win this confidence. And let every Negro be constantly careful that he does nothing to cause an interracial clash.

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"What really counts is the fundamental attitude of whites, on the one hand, and of Negroes, on the other. . . The denizens of 'Mink Slide' were wrong in shooting it out, but they must have been terribly frightened when they chose that desperate resort. The reported treatment of the radio repairman cannot be excused, but other feelings must have underlain the quarrel. The lesson for white Southerners in this affair is that they must not be content with simply drifting toward similar outbreaks of the disease of racial hatred and fear. Everybody has known that after the war trouble might come. But how much has been done to prevent clashes? In how many communities have white and colored leaders come together to keep down provocations? To what extent is the law being enforced against everybody of all complexions with respect to the possession of arms? What are police departments and sheriffs' offices and similar agencies doing to eliminate through moral suasion and through fair dealing the likelihood of race affrays?" (Birmingham Age-Herald, February 27, 1946). 3-29-46 — Friday

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TENNESSEE RIOT

The Plaindealer Kansas City, Ka

1. "Our racial relations have been good, and there has been no indication of any that would build up something like this,' was Mayor Denham's comment on the race violence which swept through Columbia, Tenn., Monday night. That is something for all of us to take to heart. The experience of this little Tennessee city might be repeated elsewhere. The appearance of race relations has little to do with its substance.

The Jurors Are Guilty

The Worker New York, N.Y.

A LILY-WHITE jury has indicted 31 Negro citizens who opposed lynching of their kin in Columbia, Tenn.

56a

The charge against 28 of these Negro citizens is "attempted murder."

On what is the charge based? On a Negro veteran's defense of his mother, assaulted by a prejudiced white radio repair man? On the bravery of a Negro community, defending itself against pillage by the state militia and police? On blocking a lynching-spree? On the death of two arrested Negro citizens in the jail house by the police officers themselves?

Civilian

Here is true Jimcrow justice. The Tennessee Grand Jury has as one of its members a notorious sympathizer of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Klan scrawl was found on the coffin of an undertaker's establishment in the Negro community on the fateful night of Feb. 25. Mon 4-1-46

Official silence pervades both the Federal Department of Justice and the office of the Governor of Tennessee, Jim McCord. No attempt has been made by the Justice Department to get a fair trial for the arrested and indicted Negro citizens.

There were officials in Germany who also watched in silence the murder of Jewish citizens.

Nothing less than a nationwide outcry will prevent the railroading of these indicted Negro citizens by a lily-white jury.

Labor, especially, should act vigorously—now. They can take their cue from the CIO resolution adopted at its recent executive board meeting, which urged labor to act, and warned against "any spread of a program of terror and lynch spirit."

All citizens, Negro and white, should demand speedy action by Attorney General Tom Clark and President Truman.

Pogrom in Tennessee

New Republic

More than sixty religious, racial and labor groups have banded together to resist the new pattern in oppression projected by the recent Negro "pogrom" in Columbia, Tennessee. The situation was bad enough when Negro persecution depended on the lynch mob, passively supported by local authorities. Now the danger arises that state officials themselves will assume the burden of Negro terrorism. New York, N.Y.

56a

In Columbia a Negro war veteran and his mother were beaten by a white mob after having been insulted by a white store clerk. The lynch spirit was up, but this time the Negroes were determined to defend themselves. They retired to their section of town and fired back at a carload of whites who drove into the area. State police then began a reign of terror that has its equal only in Gestapo annals. They wrecked Negro homes and businesses, arrested some hundred Negroes—many of them not involved in the shooting—and viciously maltreated the prisoners, killing two and wounding one. Observers returning from Columbia report that the Negroes, far from being cowed at the developments, are eager to combat this senseless attack, and are holding mass meetings in defiance of white threats. This is sensational for such a small town as Columbia, and symptomatic of the militant spirit sweeping the South. An increasingly larger proportion of Southern whites are becoming disgusted at anti-Negro hysteria. They are taking a leading part in the campaign of the sixty-odd liberal groups to rouse America against the danger of Hitler tactics. 4-1-46

—And the Part Politics Plays

In response to public opinion, Attorney General Tom Clark has ordered a federal grand jury to find out whether the state guard and local police acted in violation of constitutional civil rights. Eleanor Bontecou, the Justice Department representative who will work with the grand jury, is an excellent choice. However, there are signs that Clark would like nothing better than to see the affair die a slow and gradual death. The trouble is politics. Clark owes his appointment to Senator Connally of Texas, who is very close to Senator McKellar of Tennessee. McKellar, up for reëlection this year, depends for his votes on Boss Crump's machine. Lynn Bomar, head of the Tennessee Department of Safety, is Crump's man. Because of McKellar's tie-up with Connally, Clark is not anxious to unloose fireworks that may embarrass McKellar's campaign. Pressure forced Clark to ask for the grand-jury investigation. It will take more pressure to get further results.

56a

Tenn

Monday

In Tennessee itself, a county grand jury at Columbia is trying to throw the whole blame on the Negroes. It indicted 31 Negroes, 28 of them charged with attempted murder in the first degree. Only four white men were named in the indictment, two of whom had not even been arrested. 4-1-46

This shameful attempt to railroad fellow Americans must be smashed. The indicted Negroes must receive a fair trial. Their civil rights must be safeguarded. The guilty—white, black, officials, civilians—must be found and prosecuted. Only by prompt and drastic action—by pressure upon Governor McCord and Attorney General Clark—will this new and more dangerous type of Negro oppression be stamped out.

Clark Orders Riot Inquiry

New York. P.M. N.Y.

He Sees Threat to Rights of Minorities

3-7-46

Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Mar. 7.—Alarmed by the recent outbreak in Columbia, Tenn., U. S. Attorney General Tom C. Clark has instructed all U. S. Attorneys to exert utmost efforts "to protect human rights and civil liberties."

Clark announced that he had assigned James E. Ruffin, a special assistant, to investigate the Columbia situation in co-operation with Federal Bureau of Investigation agents. Prosecution will follow if any violation of Federal statutes is discovered, Clark said. Thursday

Columbia, where the Negro district was destructively invaded, more than 100 Negro citizens arrested and two Negro prisoners fatally shot in the local jail, was seen by Clark as having a "possible effect upon other areas."

"The civil rights of minorities in this country were never under greater threat than at this time," Clark wrote to all U. S. Attorneys. "It is my purpose to protect human rights and civil liberties, wherever they are infringed, to the full extent and intent of the Constitution and of statutory provisions."

Clark warned the Attorneys that "symptoms of increasing intolerance have been noted recently." In the drive for protection of civil liberties he asked that "special attention should be paid to laxity or inefficiency of peace officers of any category."

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2 Negroes Shot to Death Deputy Hurt In Riot Case

Courier-Journal Louisville, Ky.

Columbia, Tenn., Feb. 28 (AP)—Two Negroes were wounded fatally and two other persons, including a deputy sheriff, were shot today in the Maury County Jail.

William Gordon and James Johnson were dead upon arrival at a Nashville hospital.

The Negroes were among the approximately 100 persons held in connection with racial disorders here earlier in the week.

Friday

Says He Was Fired On.

Several hours after the jail shooting, Capt. Andrew Doyle of the State Guard reported he was fired on as he and two City policemen sought to arrest four Negroes, two men and two women, for allegedly stoning some white girls.

Doyle said a shot was fired from beneath the residence where the four Negroes were arrested.

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar said 42 Negroes had been moved to Davidson County Jail at Nashville for safekeeping and because of crowded conditions in the Maury jail.

Gordon and Johnson were shot in the jail here, Bomar said, after one of the Negroes seized a rifle confiscated Tuesday in a house-to-house search and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm. A third Negro, Napoleon Stewart, was wounded in the firing which followed. Friday

Sheriff J. J. Underwood said all confiscated weapons had been checked twice to make sure they were not loaded. "We don't know where they got the ammunition," he said. 3-1-46

Shooting Is Described.

"I had just finished telling them I was going to let them out on a small bond—around $250," Underwood added, "because we didn't consider them leaders" in the disorders.

Bomar gave this account of the shooting:

The Negroes had been brought into the office for questioning when suddenly one of them picked up a rifle from the stack of confiscated weapons in a corner of the room and fired at Darnell. 3-1-46

The shot attracted patrolmen in the next room. They dashed in and downed the Negroes with gunfire. The commissioner said the Negroes fired two shots before they were felled. Ky.

10 Hurt In 2-Day Riot.

Ten persons, including four City patrolmen, were wounded in sporadic shootings Monday night and Tuesday as a result of racial friction which Underwood said grew out of an altercation Monday between a Negro woman and her son and a white man.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Behind the Scenes in the Tennessee Rioting

Jennings Perry is editor of the Nashville Tennessean, *chairman of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax and author of* Democracy Begins at Home. *He is recognized as a progressive Southerner. PM asked him for an opinion of the story behind the story of last week's outburst of violence in Columbia, Tenn.*

P. M. New York, N. Y.

By JENNINGS PERRY

The idea ought not to get around that, because the highway patrol has been rushed to Columbia this state is on the verge of a "race revolution." Ten days ago, the State Police radio was directing the same patrol units to rush to Jamestown, in Fentress County, on the report that the Sheriff was being lynched. There is not a Negro in Fentress County. In fact, Negroes make up less than 11 per cent of the 3,000,000 population of Tennessee. In large areas on the highland rim, the Cumberland plateau and in the upper Tennessee Valley, a Negro is seldom seen. Only one county in west Tennessee—Haywood—has more Negroes than whites. Of course, all the large cities have their Harlems.

Perry

Mon 3-4-46

Tennessee has no white primary law and in the cities proportionately about as many Negroes as whites manage to get over the poll-tax obstacle to voting. There is very little political discrimination, though Negroes never get elected to office. Ordinarily the races get along together fairly well in Tennessee, better than in most Southern states, better than in some Northern states. There is a type of white politician who does not scruple to wave the bloody shirt, and a type of newspaper that abets him. At the moment, one candidate for the U. S. Senate—Herman Ross, of Jackson—is advocating depriving the Negro of all civil rights till he can be sent back to Africa. Ross will not get anywhere.

A few whites in the cities manage to live in jittery fear of an "uprising," and look under their beds for it every night. These nurse all such fictions as the Eleanor clubs and Black Dragons. Their bible still is "the leopards spots."

During this war (as the last one) you might hear some sparse talk of the necessity of "putting the Negro in his place" when he puts off his uniform. Some returning white GIs recited this theme. It is noteworthy that the white mob that milled around at Columbia the other night was made up mainly of youths, one or two still in Navy or Army garb.

The irritant of economic competition has naturally been present in a state in which until recently "a dollar a day is a nigger's pay." That is why it is mainly poor whites who take part in race demonstrations. In the cotton-producing end of the state a Negro's pay still is $2 to $2.50 per day. In industry the Negro has some protection from the minimum-wage law, but he cannot rise into management. In wartime, there were jobs for all. Only now is the white man beginning to eye askance the Negro worker at the bench.

The race question has been here since the two races have. Nothing in our times has so edged it, perhaps, as the departure of Negro women from the white kitchens—some to the mills, some because their men were making enough to take care of them, some because allotments from sons and husbands in the service were more than they make in the kitchens. This has stirred quite a white fury on the distaff side.

Mon 3-4-46

In these parts domestic service is exclusively a Negro province: even the poorest whites will not enter it, and there are no gentle German, Polish, Irish or Italian immigrants to fall back upon. White matrons, who have always had cooks and housekeepers at $4 to $8 a week, have been impatient waiting, some with anticipatory gloating; the war should be over and Mary or Anna would "come begging back." Mary and Anna, quite understandably, do not mean to go back to that if they can help it. This, I would say, is the worst fly in the ointment of race relations in Tennessee today. By far the greatest number, both of the white and the Negro people of Tennessee, are sane enough, even if they don't know just what to do about their ancient inherited problem.

Despite the recent inexcusable nastiness at Columbia and the spot of loyal hysteria from which it proceeded, there has been nothing like a race "riot" in Tennessee. I do not look for any here.

Sheriff Picks Up Some White Suspects in Tennessee Riot

P.M. New York, N.Y.

Sun. 3-3-46

Special Correspondence

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Mar. 2.—Law-enforcement authorities here have evolved the theory that last Monday night's rioting, in which 10 persons were wounded in the Negro district known as "Mink Slide," may have been incited by white persons.

"A number of white persons have already been arrested for questioning," said Sheriff James Underwood. "We are trying now to pick up some more whites." 3-3-46

56a

Underwood also disclosed that a number of Negroes had been released from jail but did not disclose how many of the 102 men arrested were still locked up there. Two Negroes were shot and killed in the jail Thursday in what was described as an escape attempt, after which 42 prisoners were shifted to Nashville to correct overcrowding.

A new contingent of State Guardsmen was moved into town following another "incident" Thursday night when rocks were thrown at some white girls near another Negro section known as "Macedonia." A shot was fired and five Negroes were arrested.

A late count showed that about 500 members of the State Board and 140 highway patrolmen were in Columbia on duty or ready for duty. Three restaurants were taken over for use by the State Guard which has no mobile kitchen units.

Chief Lynn Bomar, of the State Patrol, and he did not believe the surface had been scratched in disarming "the dangerous element." District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus was in Nashville questioning prisoners described as "ring leaders" of Monday's disturbance.

Columbia Arrests Continue As Negroes Dig Out of Rubble

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 10.—Periodic arrests of Negroes are continuing here. Friday I saw law enforcement officers strut into the wrecked but peaceful Negro business section and hustle two young men off to jail. "Attorney General Bumpus wants to see you," the white officers barked as they took the two off to the jail house for "questioning."

56a

The new arrests followed a statement by Bumpus and Sheriff J. J. Underwood that the "situation is becoming brighter" and **"everything on the streets is extraordinarily quiet."**

Mon 3-11-46

PROMISE MORE ARRESTS

But you can be sure, the statement said, they'll be more arrests. They may come tomorrow, or it may be a week.

Civilian

The last of 101 Negroes, arrested two weeks ago when the colored community fought off with shotguns an attempt to lynch a Negro Navy War veteran, were released Wednesday on bond and face charges of attempt to commit murder and carrying weapons.

At noon Friday I saw highway patrolman Flo Fleming, his right hand on his pistol but, and Constable Malcolm Grey moving through the area quizzing Negroes.

They stopped many leading Negro citizens, most of whom were recently released on bail, and questioned them concerning whereabouts of other Negroes.

BRUISED HAND

Patrolman Fleming is the brother of radio repairman William Fleming, who struck Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, mother of Jimmy Stephenson, the veteran sought last week by the would be lynchers. Jimmy had struck back at William Fleming in defense of his mother.

Flo Fleming, candidate for sheriff in the next county election, was in the van of the highway patrol detachment that rampaged through the one-block-long business section, shooting, wrecking and carrying off quantities of Negro property.

One of patrolman Fleming's hands is still bandaged. He hurt it on Negroes in the county jail.

The Negro merchants were still digging out of the rubble. The wreckage is so bad that few are yet able to conduct any trade. And those few are doing only a bare minimum of business.

SERVED THEIR COUNTRY

I have been able to ascertain that at least 60 percent of the Negroes arrested and held on serious charges are war veterans with European and Pacific battle records.

One defendant, the status of whose charges I have been unable to learn, is John Dudley, 75, only living Spanish-American war veteran in Maury County. He was held in jail 24 hours. He heard a state highway patrolman say "I'll beat the brains out of you. . . ." Dudley was arrested by patrolman Church.

I spent the entire day checking on the property damage inflicted by the lynch-bent white men. It is yet impossible accurately to estimate the money-value of the destroyed and stolen property.

A Nashville photographer, employed by the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, is also on the scene. He has photographs are expected to be used as evidence for the defense in the mounting number of cases against Negroes. Police ordered the cameraman out of the area. He challenged the cops' authority to remove him and continued his work.

FBI agents are still on the area. They have questioned nearly every Negro arrested during the assault.

Midwest Aroused; Send Groups to D. C.

CHICAGO, March 10. Packinghouse workers plan to send a mass delegation to Washington tomorrow to protest the anti-Negro violence in Tennessee.

Department meetings were held last week in many big plants to hear reports of the reign of terror which swept through the Tennessee town. A meeting of the CIO Packinghouse District Council was also summoned to take action.

The Columbia Emergency Defense Committee is holding a meeting at Wendell Phillips High School today to back the movement.

Mon 3-11-46

WASHINGTON, March 10.—The National Negro Congress, in a telegram to Attorney Tom Clark, demanded that the policemen responsible for the deaths of two Negroes in Columbia, Tenn., be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

The selection of an "all white" jury, was described by Charles S. Hill, NNC chairman as "further evidence of the utter disregard of the civil rights of the Negro people of Columbia."

The NNC in a call to all people of America asks that thousands of letters and telegrams be sent to President Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark in Washington and Gov. Jim McCord at Nashville.

Trouble In Maury Caused By Threat To Stage Lynching

Nashville Globe Tenn

Friday

COLUMBIA, TENN.—With only ten persons injured, despite the greatest amount of gunfire ever heard in this little town, Tennessee and the nation are undoubtedly in a better light before the world than they would have been had not a group of colored men of Columbia jeopardized their lives and the lives of their families and property to prevent another lynching in Maury County. Whatever is to be the outcome of the trials of a number of colored leaders, who were languishing in jail here Wednesday, the verdict of all unbiased persons who will have gotten the real facts that brought on the trouble which has been miscalled a "race riot," will be that the jailed colored leaders acted in self-defense, and had they been white men they would have been called alert and useful citizens, instead of being smeared as criminals.

There were about 70 colored men in jail Wednesday. Among them were such well known Columbians as James Morton, undertaker; Solomon Blair and his father Julius Blair owners of a drug store and other business places on Eighth Street and Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist pastor. The understanding is that these leaders are to be charged with "attempted murder" and if convicted, will be sent to prison. Their indictment, if any, will be made by an all-white grand jury, because, despite what the Supreme Court of the United States has said, they have only all-white grand juries in Maury County. If they are brought to trial they will face an all-white petit jury and a full array of court officials, all of whom will be white.

The daily press associations and newspapers of this area have already given the white folks' side of the Columbia trouble. They have suppressed all of the facts that would lead an unbiased person to appreciate the harrassment of Columbia's colored people, both before and at the time of the flare-up on Monday and Monday night of this week.

Prior to Monday's trouble, colored Columbians were aware of two lynchings in or near Columbia in recent years, and for which not a single member of the mobs was brought to justice. The first of these two lynchings was in the heart of the city. It is said that for a year or so thereafter, one of the sights of Columbia was the courthouse from which the colored man was lynched, showing the rope with which he was hanged, dangling from a window.

The other lynching was that of a boy named Cordie Cheek, charged with molesting a white girl but who after being spirited to Nashville for safe keeping, was set free by grand jury action. Cordie, after being released from the Nashville jail, went to the home of a relative near Fisk University, and very shortly thereafter, members of a mob came to the home brandishing shotguns, took the boy away in a car and lynched him near Columbia. It is reported that there were some 500 persons in the mob. Nobody was ever convicted or tried for that brutal lynching.

It was with these thoughts in mind that colored Columbians prepared to prevent the lynching of a mother and her son here this past week. The mother, was Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, 37 and her son James Stephenson, 19. On Monday the mother and son were in the Castner Knott store on Columbia's Public Square. There the mother had words with a white radio repairman of the firm about her radio, in which she disputed his claim that the radio had been repaired. A fight ensued, resulting in the mother being beaten and knocked down. The boy and mother fought back, which resulted in the young white man getting knocked through a glass window, and injured by the broken glass. Shortly thereafter, policemen came and arrested the mother and her son but did not arrest the white man, so the mother states. Mother and son were put in jail. Colored business leaders, fearing the mother and son would be taken out and lynched, got both out of jail on bond, amounting to more than $3,000.

The fighting incident, and the fact that the mother and son had been released from jail, appear to have aroused a number of whites. Rev. Calvin Lockridge, colored Baptist pastor, testifies that he heard that a man had gone into a store to purchase a rope and had said they intended to lynch the Negroes in "Mink Slide," the colored business section of Columbia. When this threat got to the colored people of the section they went to their homes, got their guns and decided to defend themselves as best they could against mob violence. As a first precaution they put out all of the lights in their section of the town.

With their section blacked out and all of them excited over the expected visit of the mob, the nervousness of the colored citizens was intensified when some white men came through the section and fired guns, presumably to frighten the people of the community. Colored citizens say that these were the first shots fired—the shots by the white motorists. Later, four white policemen drove their car into the section and they were fired upon, presumably by some of the colored citizens. The report of colored persons is that it was not possible to tell the police from any other white persons.

It was after the officers had been shot that city and county officials called for help. One hundred highway patrolmen and about 500 members of the State Guard were rushed to Columbia promptly by Gov. Jim Nance McCord. These completely surrounded the colored business section but did not move in until after daybreak, Tuesday morning. When they did go in they used their tommy guns with devastating effect, but succeeded only in wrecking about all of the business places in the area. No serious casualties resulted. Much property was damaged, and according to a relative of Julius Blair, drugstore owner, his soda fountain was wrecked and, when the smoke of the conflict had lifted, he was minus most of the money he had in the drugstore.

After the highway patrolmen and militia had taken over the area, the sheriff appointed about 125 of them as his deputies and they were sent on a house-to-house search for firearms. It appears that very little consideration was given to that clause in the Constitution of the United States which protects a citizen from unreasonable search and seizure. There was no report of white homes being searched and their arms taken from them. Even white citizens who were seen roaming the streets with sawed-off shotguns, reportedly were merely asked by authorities to go home and put them away.

On their visit to the home of Undertaker Morton, about twelve citizens were found. They were said to have had guns and officers claim to have found some liquor. Undertaker Morton appears to have been selected as a ringleader when the "unreasonable search and seizure" of his home was made. He was put in jail and kept all through Tuesday night. Nashville friends of the undertaker and other leaders made bond of $2,000 each for the jailed men. However, Columbia citizens had not released the men Wednesday afternoon.

When news of the Columbia trouble spread throughout the nation it was made much of in metropolitan dailies, all of them taking the angle that Negroes had staged a riot. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People took prompt action in petitioning Gov. McCord for a fair administration of the law. U. S. Attorney General Clark was importuned to have District Attorney Horace Frierson make an investigation.

After all of the danger to lives and damage to property had taken place the mayor and highway patrol chief took commendable action to allay the trouble. They went about the city, and especially the colored section, with loud speakers assuring the people that all was well and that the military men were in town to protect all citizens, re less of race. It is believed tha this sort of broadcasting been at the very beginning of threa hostilities there never would been any shooting.

There Was a Hospital Next Door; They Were Negroes . . . They Died

Daily Worker New York N.Y.

Sat. 3-2-46

Special to the Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 1.—Two young men, riddled with bullets, with a chance to live only if given the best of medical attention immediately, lay bleeding on the floor of the Columbia Jail yesterday.

56a

Tenn

A few steps away was the City Hospital. Why were desperately wounded William Gordon and James W. Johnson not carried the few steps to the local hospital?

Because they were Negroes.

Forty-three miles away, across Mary and Williamson Counties, in Nashville, are three hospitals in which Negroes are treated as bed patients. Gordon and Johnson, in a condition where each minute counted for life or death, were taken for an hour-and-a-half drive they never completed alive.

These were the first deaths in the Columbia affair.

The deaths are at the hands of the police. They shot down unarmed prisoners in their custody. If for a fleeting instant one of the prisoners had a gun in his hand, it was placed within his reach by the police. Then they shot to kill.

When the bullets did not fulfill their purpose, the police took the two men for a ride. The hour and a half of jolting over 43 miles to Nashville finished what the bullets began.

The only deaths are the killing of prisoners in the custody of the police, by the police.

Now the all-white grand jury will indict Negroes. And the labor movement and the whole honest world must defend them. Sat. 3-2-46

Columbia Boasts Long Tradition As Lynch Town

Chicago Defender

Ill.

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—Columbia is a lynch-crazed town.

It lies near the birthplace of the Ku-Klux-Klan, Pulaski, Tenn.

This week the town lived up to its birthright and terrorized its 3,000 Negro citizens.

56a

When 37-year-old Mrs. Gladys Stevenson and her 19-year-old son, J. C. Stevenson, a veteran of three years in the South Pacific, were mauled and beaten by a white mob, the town took it in its stride. It was an old tradition.

Now fresh with the memory of excessive $3,500 bail paid by Negro businessmen to temporarily free the Stevenson and the holding down and jailing of the benefactors, Columbia Negroes steeled themselves for the bitter battle to come and looked back upon the lynch history of this race-crazed community. Sat.

They remember the case of Rush Cheeks, a young Negro who was lynched in 1936 by a Columbia mob. They remember Jim Dotson, who last year was chased out of town by a vindicative mob. They remember the case of Joe Scales, taken out of a Nashville jail and lynched on a Tennessee highway by a mob from Columbia.

Also seared in the memory of Columbia's 3,000 Negroes is the active race-hate campaign of William Fleming, a 28-year-old white man who lead this week's riots.

Most of Columbia's 150 young Negro veterans of the bitter 'war against fascism' who have returned to their home town barricaded themselves and prepared for the race riot which threatened following the release of Mrs. Stevenson.

Many of Columbia's Negroes are property owners and their leaders rank with the outstanding Negroes of Tennessee.

They take an active part in the political activities of the city, voting mainly Republican. They have 14 churches, representing six denominations; they enjoy the facilities of one elementary and one high school. 3-9-46

Most of their children go to Nashville to attend Fisk or A. and I. College. The town is only 43 miles from Nashville. The influence of their leadership was indicated when an NAACP lawyer from Chattanoogo, white, went to the city Wednesday to obtain statements from 72 prominent Negro leaders held in jail by Sheriff J. J. Underwood. 3-9-46

Nat Williams, representative of the MEMPHIS WORLD, and the Chicago Defender, and only Negro newspaperman to cover the situation, after having been in the city for several hours, summarily was ordered to make tracks for the bus station by a subordinate of the city highway patrol, after having been questioned in the midst of an interview with Sheriff Underwood at the county jail.

60

Terror Bands, Guardsmen Invade Jimcrow Quarter in Tennessee Town

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Wed 2-27-46

Terror struck the Negro community of Columbia, Tenn., at dawn yesterday, when 500 National Guardsmen moved into the Negro section firing riot guns. Ten persons were wounded in the night's disorder. Seventy-three Negroes and two whites were arrested, 12 of the Negroes charged with murder, after night-long battles in the Jimcrow Negro district, the United Press reported.

Mayor Eldridge Denham issued a proclamation late today to "all citizens of all races" asking them to be "cool and sane."

56a Civilian

The district where most of the town's 3,000 Negroes live showed many signs of the battle. Not a store in the two-block Negro business area remained intact. Police had opened up with machineguns on Negroes barricaded in their homes, scarring the walls and shattering windows.

The anti-Negro violence began last night after a Negro woman, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, and her son James, had an altercation with a white Navy veteran. They were released from jail on bond last night and told to leave town. The Navy veteran, radio repairman William Fleming, 28, was hospitalized but was not in serious condition.

The news service accounts of the events at Columbia are not clear as to the fighting which immediately followed the intimidation of the Stephensons. It is implied, however, that white bands roamed the Negro quarter, and that Negro vets and others armed themselves and fired on the invaders. From then on, sporadic shooting continued until late morning. The Daily Worker will carry eyewitness accounts as soon as our correspondent reaches the scene. Wed 2-27-46

Lynn Bomar, head of the State Highway Patrol, led the Guards in a dawn raid serching every Negro building, firing through windows when Negro citizens refused to open their doors.

Bomar described the raid as "a success." He said his men fired into some windows and that their fire was answered by "two or three shots" from the Negroes. Later in the day, he spoke over a loud speaker to the Negro residents.

"There is not going to be any more trouble" he announced. "Every thing is all right. Let me see you smile. Come on, Smile. We're going to get things straightened out."

The first police raid into the Negro community was a dawn surprise attack that "caught" 12 of the alleged ringleaders of what is termed the Negro uprising. The others arrested were taken in the following raids.

A cordon of highway patrolmen was thrown around the Negro community at 7:45 a. m. and was responsible for holding back hundreds of white persons from what police termed the "danger area." Some of these whites had been out during the night armed with pistols, squirrel guns and rifles ready for trouble, but a great majority had locked their doors and remained quitely at home.

Rumors spread quickly of lynching parties being formed. Negroes armed with .weapons .taken from German and Japanese war prisoners for souvenirs formed in large groups. Wed 2-27-46

Less than four hours after the search began, more than 300 weapons had been confiscated. However, their owners were not arrested. The weapons ranged from ancient flintlocks to captured German and Japanese automatic weapons, including one Schmeisser pistol (Burp gun) and a quantity of ammunition were taken, as were mauser rifles and Japanese rifles.

Mayor Denham's proclamation calling for "coolness" came long after city police called on the National Guard for help and a battalion of 500 commanded by Brig. Gen. Jacob M. Dickinson and spearheaded by armour scout cars mounting loudspeakers, rolled into the Negro community.

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3 More Arrests Made In Columbia

Black Dispatch
Oklahoma City, Okla.

COLUMBUS, Tenn. — (ANP) — In an attempt to round up the 33 Negroes named on indictments in connection with the February riot here, three more arrests were made last week-end, it was announced by Sheriff J. J. Underwood.

Taken into custody were John Lockridge, John Blackwell and Gene Williams, all of whom have been charged with assult with intent to commit murder in the first degree. The three were released immediately on bond of $5,000 each, the sheriff said.

Blackwell was reported to have been suffering from a wound received during the racial clashes which were halted by 600 state gardsmen and 75 highway patrolmen. Sat 4-13-46

The district attorney general said the the most recent arrests left only five Negroes and two whites to be apprehended. Meanwhile letters and telegraphic messages continued to pour into the office of Gov. McCord, according to reports. The governor is said to welcome the investigation by FBI agents, although some state officials are declared to be condemning what they call "northern interference" in the Columbia affair.

56a Civilian

Jimcrow Justice

Daily Worker

DOWN in Columbia City, Tenn., a federal grand jury is preparing its case against 31 indicted Negro victims of lynch terror. New York, N.Y.

Scheduled to convene in early May, the people of this nation would do well to ponder the composition of the jury as a sample of lynch justice to Negro citizens.

56a Civilian

Here are the facts:

- As a result of prompt and vehement protest to the Justice Department against violations of constitutional rights of Negroes, a federal grand jury (already in existence) at Nashville was given the task of investigating the Columbia case. Mon 4-29-46
- U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark gave supervision of the inquiry to Federal District Judge Davies of the district. Deeply steeped in Jimcrow philosophy are both Judge Davies and Horace Frierson, U.S. District Attorney.
- Frierson was entrusted the task of inquiring into the matter and presenting the evidence of violations just shortly after two Negro witnesses were murdered by the police in the process of "questioning." This is the same Frierson who, on the second day of the bloodshed, publicly declared that there had been no violation of the constitutional rights of Negroes.

On this federal grand jury, there are no Negroes. Yet the most material violation of constitutional rights of the Negroes consists in the exclusion of Negroes from the panel from which are drawn both the county grand jury and the county petit jury. Hence, the resulting trial of Negroes by an all-white jury on indictments drawn against them by an all-white jury.

This is a dangerous situation. There can be no question but that a whitewash of the Columbia murderers and would-be lynchers of the Negro people is shaping up unless tremendous heat is turned on this grand jury and its direct cohorts, Judge Davies and U.S. Attorney Horace Frierson.

The people, and especially labor, should let it be known in no uncertain terms that Negroes should be placed on the federal jury. They should repeat their vehement protest, which immediately followed the Tennessee events, to U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark and President Truman letting them know that the people of America are vigilantly watching this vital case.

Whites Indicted in Columbia To Hide Negro "Legal Lynch"

People's Voice New York. N.Y.

4-6-46

The four white men indicted with the 31 Negroes in Columbia, Tenn., are merely dummies to make the frame-up against the Negroes appear honest, Robert Minor points out in the *Daily Worker* this week. He declared that the charge of attempted murder, upon which the white men were indicted by the grand jury last week, is a phony one and it is known that it cannot be proved against these particular persons. According to information he received in Columbia, last week, Minor wrote, the attempted murder charge against the white men consists of "trying to kick in the jail door."

He predicts that only the Negroes will be convicted unless the movement to save them will be "as big and bold and fast as the one that thwarted the frameup of the Scottsboro boys fifteen years ago."

The 25 Negroes indicted for attempted murder in the first degree are Tommy Baxter, James Thomas Ballanfant, Solomon Blair, Clarence Brown, Charles C. Edwards, Luther Edwards, Robert Gentry, the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Webster Matthews, John McGivens, and Lewis Miles.

Also James Morton, Meade Johnson, Charles Smith, William Bills, William Dawson, Horace Gordon, Milton Johnson, John Lickbridge, Willie Pigg, Raymond Lockbridge, Early Scott, Napoleon Stewart and Gene Williams. 4-6-46

STEPHENSON INDICTED

Of these 25, four were indicted on another count of being accessories before the fact to attempted murder in the first degree. They are Blair, Morton, Johnson and Ballanfant.

Indicted on a separate count of attempt to commit murder in the first degree are James Stephenson and his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, whose attack by white radio repairmen precipitated the riot, and who were believed saved from lynching by the action of the other Negroes in the community.

William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy were indicted for attempt to commit murder on another separate count. Another count charged John Blackwell, who was severely beaten by state patrolmen, with attempt to commit murder in the first degree.

Undertaker James Morton faces a charge of being accessory after the fact to the crime of attempted murder. Additional charges of carrying dangerous weapons, with a $50 fine and one year in jail penalty were brought against Blair, Rev. Lockridge, Ballanfant, Johnson, Morton and George McHolsier.

EINSTEIN JOINS GROUP

Responding to an appeal by the NAACP to lend their names and influence to the movement to free the Negro victims. a host of prominent citizens, many of them internationally famous, have stated thier willingness to serve on a committee. Represented in the group are outstanding statesmen, churchmen, journalists, and welfare leaders. 4-6-46

Heading the list on the newly formed committee is Albert Einstein, Harold Ickes, Sidney Hillman, Col. Roy Evans Carlson, hero of Carlson's marine raiders, David O. Selznick, Hollywood executive, Herbert Lehman, ex-UNRRA chief, Helen Hayes and Hilda Simms of the theatre.

Prominent Group Joins Committee On Columbia 'Riots'

The Star of Zion
Charlotte, N.C.

New York, N. Y.—Responding to an appeal by the NAACP to lend their names and influence to a tremendously growing movement to free the Negro victims of the recent Columbia 'riots' a host of prominent citizens, many of them internationally famous, have stated their willingness to serve on a committee. Represented in the group are outstanding statesmen, churchmen, journalists and welfare leaders.

Heading the list on the newly formed committee is Albert Einsten, world famous scientist and pioneer in the development of atomic energy. The list also includes Harold Ickes, ex-Secretary of the Interior, Sidney Hillman, labor leader, Col. Roy Evans Carlson, hero of Carlson's marine raiders, David O. Selsnick, Hollywood Executive, Herbert Lehman, ex-UNNRA chief, Helen Hayes and Hilda Sims of the theater. Thur. 4-18-46

Also serving on the comimttee are Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Judge Jane Bolin, Oscar C. Brown, Chicago NAACP; James B. Carey, Cong. William L. Dawson, Earl B. Dickerson, Roscoe Dungee, Edwin R. Embree, W. J. Faulkner, David M Grant, Thomas L. Griffith, Jr., Geo. E. C. Hayes, Rev. Charles Hill, Lillie M. Jackson, Baltimore NAACP; Dr. D. V. Jemisen, National Baptist Convention, Inc., Rev. John H. Johnson, Freda Kirchway, Cong. Charles LaFollette, Max Lerner, A. A. Lucas, Houston, Texas NAACP State Conference. Also Senator Wayne Morse; Carl Murphy, NAACP Board Member, T. G. Nutter, Charleston, West Virginia; James G. Patton; Charles Poletti; Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.; A. Philip Randolph; Dr. E. I. Robinson, National Medical Association;

(Continued on page eight)

William Jay Schieffelin; John H. Sengstache, Nathan Strauss; Mabel K. Staupers, National Association of Graduate Nurses; Dr. J. M. Tinsley, NAACP Board Member;; Leon Washington, Jr., Los Angeles Sentinel, Bishop W. J. Walls, NAACP Board Member; Carter Wesley, Beulah Whitby; Evans F. Carlson; Mrs. Robert L. Vann,; Rabbi Stephen Wise; Charles G. Bolte, American Veteran's Committee; Helen Haden; George E. Haynes, Federal Council of Churches; Ira Lewis, Pittsburgh Courier; Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas; Edward L. Bernays, William Green, A. F. of L,; Russell Davenport; Lililan Smith; David O. Selznick; Clarence E. Pickett; American Friends Service Committee; Langston Hughes, Lewis Gannett, Herald Tribune; Hilda Simms, Newbold Norris; John Hammond, NAACP Board Member; Herbert Lehman; Bartley Crum; William H. Hastie, NAACP Board Member and Dean of Howard Law School; Rev. Allan Knight Chalmers, NAACP Board Member; Arthur Spingarn, President of NAACP and John Haynes Holmes NAACP Board Member.

Thur. 4-18-46

P. B. Young, Sr., Norfolk Journal and Guide, wired Walter White, NAACP Secretary in New York, to offer not only his name to the committee but also financial support to the much needed defense fund.

All-White U.S. Jury Gets Columbia Case

Daily Worker, New York, N.Y.

By ROBERT MINOR

Feb. 4, 1946

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 9. — An all-white Federal Grand Jury of 23 members continued today its inquiry as to whether constitutional rights of Negroes have been violated in the actions of police which followed the unsuccessful effort on Feb. 25 to lynch the 19-year-old Negro war veteran, James Stephenson, and his mother.

At its opening session yesterday, the Grand Jury heard a charge by U. S. District Judge Elmer D. Davies, Arkansas born, who long practiced law at Nashville prior to his appointment to the judgeship in 1939.

The charge to the Grand Jury is given prominence by the local press. **The Columbia Daily Herald** hails it as signifying a "possibility that members of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, Nashville, will be indicted" for its action in denouncing the violations of the Negroes' rights, and that this will be the outcome of the present Federal inquiry.

"WILFULLY" STRESSED

Judge Davies charged the Grand Jury that any public officer who may be found to have deprived anyone of his civil rights under the 14th amendment must be indicted. But he qualified this with heavy emphasis upon the word "wilfully" as it appears in the Federal statue, saying there must be no indictment unless the wilful violation is "done with a bad purpose and intent."

The contention of the partisans of Lynn Bomar, State Public Safety director, aided by State Guardsmen, machine-gunned and demolished the Negro business section of Columbia and two days later shot to death two young Negroes in their custody, who were under questioning in the jail house, is that it was done without any bad purpose or intent, but as a means of keeping the Negroes under a sense of authority. Young Negroes, some of them veterans, had held off the mob with shotguns and slightly wounded several policemen with birdshot. Wed. 4-10-46

PAMPHLET INTRODUCED

The Southern Conference for Human Welfare was brought into the field of inquiry when the judge handed the grand jury copies of the pamphlet "The Truth about the **Columbia, Tenn., cases"** published by that organization and written by its president, Clark H. Foreman, of Atlanta.

"If the facts alleged in this pamphlet are true," said the judge, **"then officials have been guilty of very serious offenses against the Constitution and laws of the United States and, if they are true, it is your duty to return, indictments, regardless of whom the officials might be."** He continued: Wed 4-10-46

"If they are not true, then the circulators of this pamphlet should be exposed for deliberately agitating matters of this kind to cause difficulties between races which are trying to live together in peace and harmony."

The Federal Grand Jury's authority in this case extends only to questions of violation of constitutional right, and it can in no lawful way bring indictments against persons for denouncing the crime.

A small body of armed white men yesterday stopped a Negro school bus two miles south of Columbia. This is a bus formerly driven by James T. Balafant, one of the men now under indictment for having participated in the action which prevented the lynching of James Stephenson and his mother.

When the band saw that the bus was not driven by Ballanfant, but by a substitute, they allowed it to proceed.

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Tenn. State Troopers Turn Into Vandals

Afro American

Baltimore, Md

White NAACP Lawyer Reveals Complete Disregard of Man's Rights

Sat 3-23-46

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Although called in to guard and protect the colored community of this city during the recent riot, members of the State Patrol and the State Guard definitely aggravated the situation by their officially committed acts of vandalism, Maurice Weaver, white, Chattanooga lawyer and member of the NAACP legal committee, reveals in a report of his investigation.

56a

Mr. Weaver had been called into action within a few hours after the national office of the NAACP had received news of the rioting in Columbia on Monday, Feb. 5.

At the same time, the NAACP, fearing just such vandalism and intimidation, had telegraphed Gov. Jim McCord, President Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark, asking that each use his offices to afford the colored citizens full protection.

Civilian

Hit Business Places

A World War II veteran, Mr. Weaver discloses further that the vandalism of the Hitler-like police officers was concentrated on the business section, especially on the long-established enterprises.

Members of a cordon thrown about one block of the colored section following the wounding of four city policemen, the State militiamen had established official control by dawn of Feb. 26, the day after the rioting commenced.

Fire on Buildings

The situation under control, Mr. Weaver adds. they entered the business section, first firing into various buildings and then breaking into them and committing all possible acts of vandalism.

His on-the-spot investigation, Mr. Weaver asserts, revealed the following acts of vandalism:

They shot out windows, broke up showcases, tore up cash registers, broke a Victrola and radio, broke up the pool tables and threw away the balls, tore the top off a Frigidaire, knocked a clock off the wall and splintered all the tables and chairs.

Ku Klux Klan Threat

Civilian

In Dr. Hawthorne's place, they threw out all of his instruments and generally demolished his equipment, while in the Atlanta Life Insurance Company office, they destroyed all files and records.

Sat 3-23-46

At the Morton Funeral Home, they not only destroyed all the ... but they also broke chandeliers, lights, Venetian blinds, floor lamps, file cabinets, cut up all draperies, sprinkled white powder on a navy blue casket on which they marked "KKK" and soiled all caskets.

The barber shop was also shot into and wrecked, the four barber chairs being completely cut up, the large mirror shot up, all electric clippers taken out and the premises demolished.

Returning to Maury County on the following morning, the lawyer was told by a deputy at the jail that it would be impossible either to see the sheriff or to talk with any of the men in jail.

The sheriff's office insisted that he establish proof that he had been retained by the men held in jail to represent them.

Then learning that colored citizens were to be taken before the Board of Investigation, he asked permission to appear before the board, to sit in on and to hear the development of the case.

This board consisted of the district attorney-general, Paul F. Bumpus; the sheriff of Maury County; the county prosecutor; the representative of the State Attorney General's office, Jack Smith and Chief Lynn Bomar of the State Highway Patrol.

Guards All Around

In addition, there was a great milling around of many State Highway Patrolmen and State Guards who were present in the room in great numbers.

Talking with Mr. Bumpus, Mr. Weaver declared that he believed any statement by any man brought before the Board of Investigation would not be a voluntary statement but would be made under coercion and intimidation.

He also requested the right to talk to prisoners who would subsequently be brought before the board to advise them as a lawyer, fully and completely of their rights to refuse to make a statement.

Mr. Bumpus joined with the sheriff's office in refusing him any opportunity to see any people in jail or any of the 75 later brought before the Board of Investigation.

No Information on Murders

At the same time that Mr. Weaver talked to District Attorney Bumpus, the two men later killed and the one wounded were in the ante-room at the jail waiting to appear before the Board of Investigation.

He was refused permission to see them and has no knowledge directly except on the basis of reports from the sheriff and from general rumor relating to their killing.

Kept Away From Blair

"On Thursday afternoon, after the murder of the two men," Mr. Weaver reports, "I again asked to see Mr. Blair; I was refused permission to see him by the sheriff and was permitted to talk with the sheriff only in the presence of Chief Lynn Bomar.

"Finally, it was agreed upon that I might see Mr. Blair at 9 o'clock. Mr. Blair was then still in the Maury County jail. The sheriff told me that he expected to have Mr. Blair transferred to Davidson County on Thursday night at 9 o'clock.

"When I reached the jail, I was admitted and talked first with Mr. Bomar from whom I received permission to see the sheriff. The sheriff then advised me that Mr. Blair had been transferred to the Davidson County jail.

"When asked for a list of men transferred to Davidson County, the sheriff declared that he did not have a record of or know who had been sent to Davidson County.

Sat 3-23-46

No Record Given

Records, however, showed that the men were transferred under a special petition filed before Judge Ingram of the Circuit Court, naming the particular and individual persons to be transferred.

In addition to destroying the entire business section, the State Guard and the State Highway Patrol terrorized the residential area to which the colored persons had fled for self-protection.

First firing into the homes, the officers then entered them, lined up every person, including the children, searched them and confiscated all weapons. Finally, they arrested most of the men.

During his investigation, Mr. Weaver asserts, the sheriff admitted to him that the policemen had entered the homes without search warrants but added that those of both colored and white persons had been entered in an effort to disarm the town.

Held Without Charges

Those arrested, about 70 at the time, were held without bail and without formal charges, refused permission to communicate with relatives, friends or lawyers.

Assured by J. J. Underwood

the sheriff, that the men would be released on bail as promptly as possible, Mr. Weaver communicated with Julius Blair, 77, who revealed that he could make or arrange bond for all those in jail.

Together the two men talked with first the sheriff and then with the country district attorney general, both of whom declared that the bonds would be fixed promptly and would be the normal bonds for similar offenses.

Relying upon their assurance, Mr. Weaver returned to Chattanooga and within two hours after he had left, Mr. Blair, a long-respected citizen, was placed under arrest on a charge of being an accessory before the fact.

New Arrests Withheld

On Wednesday night, Feb. 27, Mr. Weaver called the sheriff from Chattanooga to learn whether bonds had been made and was advised that the jail was not completely cleared.

However, he was not told that new arrests had been made and that Mr. Blair had been placed under arrest.

Concluding his report, Mr. Weaver states:

"The entire pattern in Maury County appears to be an attempt to develop and support the idea that there has been an endeavor on the part of the colored citizens armed insurrection.

The chief of the highway patrol to establish and bring about an told me that they were developing in their investigation the fact that six or more colored men in Maury County were endeavoring to set up a dictatorship of colored citizens.

"He further declares that there would be no peace until whites and good colored citizens organize to surmount the bad relations existing.

Fear Governed Actions

"The entire investigation has been carried on by the State with **the greatest intimidation and coercion or milling mobs of authority.**

"Colored citizens held in jail have been alarmed and disturbed for their future safety and have been forced to make completely involuntary statements that may probably in the future be held or used against them."

To Undertake Defense

As a result of the investigation by Mr. Weaver and another by Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, the national office decided to undertake the full defense of all those wrongfully charged with crimes in connection with the rioting.

56a

In addition, it has agreed to take all necessary action to punish the local and State peace officers guilty of disregarding the Constitutional rights of the colored citizens.

To that end, the office has called for telegrams to President Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark asking Federal action, the organization of local Columbia Defense Fund Committees and the planning of a protest mass meeting.

An Amazing Document

Daily Worker

AN amazing report comes from Atlanta, Ga.

The Southern Regional Council, with Negro and white members, says that in the anti-Negro violence at Columbia, Tenn., "plenty of mistakes were committed on both sides."

That's rich. Two Negro citizens are murdered, and an entire Negro community is terrorized and pillaged all night. But "both sides made mistakes." What "mistakes" did the Negro people make? That more of them did not get killed? That many of the Negro people would not be treated like dogs, and dared to stand up for their rights?

Wed - 6-19-46

The Council urges "sensible people to get together" and establish "normal means of communications" between the Negro community and white folks.

But what balks this "communication"? Has the Council forgotten the brutal jimcrowism which crowds the Negro people into ghettos, which warns both Negro and white against fraternization and common social action?

Facing indictment are the Negro leaders who sought to defend the rights of their community. The mobsters and Klansmen are not indicted. Yet the Council even goes so far as to praise the Sheriff Underwood who allowed lawless violence to roar all night through the Negro community.

New York

All the more shocking is this report when it is remembered that it coincides with the scandalous Federal Grand Jury report which completely whitewashes the Tennessee perpetrators of this anti-Negro violence.

Instead of the Southern Council helping the perpetrators of anti-Negro violence, let them demand a new probe by the Federal government. For the present Federal report serves notice to all that the Federal government cannot be relied on to uphold the rights of Negro citizens.

Wed - 6-19-46

What is needed is not a "plague on both your houses" review of Tennessee. What is needed now is for labor and the people north and south to realize that the Columbia case is determining the fate not only of Negro citizens but of all Americans who hate and fear fascism.

Tenn. Version of Lynching Described by NAACP Secretary and 'Riot' Victim

Afro American
Baltimore, Md

Tactics of 'New' Fascists, Plans for Fight Revealed by Julius Blair, Walter White

Sat 5-11-46

NEW YORK — Plans for the defense of the victims of the Columbia (Tenn.) outbreaks and a first-hand account of the terrorism by the militia were given by Walter White, NAACP secretary, and Julius Blair, respectively, at a press conference here last week.

Terming the "rioting" in February "a new pattern of violence and a new form of lynching, not used by civilians as heretofore, but now by uniformed State militia," Mr. White told reporters:

"We are going to use the press and radio to brand this type of fascism which must be stopped in its tracks before it consumes the entire country.

Anxious to Curb Vets

"We've known for some time that some communities in the South have been storing up anti-riot ammunition to quell returning veterans who fought in this war and want to share in the democratic process of life.

"At the first sign of trouble, they move in and surround the community with tommy-guns. This is a new form of lynching."

However, he revealed, the NAACP and affiliated organizations are determined to bring the culprits to justice and assure financial restitution made to those whose homes and businesses were vandalized."

Indicative of Trend

In one sense, he stated, the situation was both hopeful and dangerous since the resort to violence is indicative of the Southern white man's fear that the colored people will not return to their former places.

"It is also a fear the South has of efforts of the CIO to organize its workers, as well as prevention of any movements of virilism," he said.

Anti-Bias Forces United

"There is evidence in some places that the Klan is reorganizing. Crosses have been burned in Chattanooga; and the United Sons of Dixie, similar to the Klan, is attempting to organize in Tennessee."

On the other hand, he added, all Tennessee is not in favor of what was done and revealed that a State-wide interracial committee is currently working in association with the NAACP, for justice as opposed to brutality.

Tells of Own Activity

Talking up the narrative, Mr. Blair, a tall, well-built man who appears 20 years younger than his 76 years, revealed not only the damage done to him and his business but also the part he played in helping other victims.

Mr. Blair established his drug store in Columbia over 35 years ago.

Valued at about $4,500, it was smashed up and completely wrecked by vandals, who destroyed fixtures, show cases, vacuum cleaners and his entire stock, and also stole $80 in cash.

Not Vindictive

He has had to pay for remodeling the store out of his own pocket and revealed that several of the 10-odd businessmen whose places were demolished have had to close up.

Owner of two houses with white tenants, Mr. Blair said: "The tenants asked me whether I would make them move, after all this riot business.

"I told them they could stay. I have no intention of doing any such thing."

Spirit Youth Away

Discussing events from the beginning on Feb. 25, he said that after taking his daughter and grandson to Nashville, he, with his son, Saul, posted $7,000 bond for young Stevenson and his mother, attack of whom provoked the rioting.

Later, he added, his son, acting on word from Sheriff Underwood, took young Stevenson to Nashville, bought him a ticket for Chicago, and sent him away.

Although he believed the trouble was over, Mr. Blair continued, the sheriff called him back and told him to get all the boys off the street or they would be put in jail.

White Lawyer Enters Case

After the arrest of his son, the businessman told the reporters, he went to the jail where Maurice Weaver, white attorney, who had called in the NAACP, was getting a statement from the sheriff.

Weaver and Blair, with James Moulton, local undertaker, then attempted to get the district attorney's office to set bail for Saul Blair but were refused by District Attorney Paul Bumpus, who said that the son was being held for attempted murder.

"Too Many Friends"

While seeking the sheriff again Mr. Blair continued, a highway patrolman took him to city hall where he saw Sheiff Underwood, who said, "You have too many friends, Blair . . . We can't put you in jail."

Then driving away, he said, he was forced to stop by highway patrolmen who made him get out of his car and told him to put up his hands.

"They asked me whether I had a gun and called me "an old, grey-haired s—o—b—h,' " Mr. Blair revealed. "This was the first time I was ever arrested in my life."

40 Others in One Van

He told further how he was placed in a moving van, along with 40 others, and driven to Nashville, the driver purposely choosing the worst roads in order to shake them up.

Sat 5-11-46

Although they were held incommunicado for a while, Mr. Blair stated, he finally communicated with his lawyer, R. S. Hopkins, white, and bail was set at $5,000, the charge being attempted murder in the first degree.

Mr. Blair is one of the several victims of the outbreak now on a fund-raising tour for the NAACP.

Tenn. Riot Victim Gets Aid in Boston

Pictured after mass meeting of the Boston NAACP branch held at Ebenezer Baptist Church and in protest against the recent pogrom against Columbia, Tenn., citizens, are Irwin T. Dorch, attorney, former president of the Boston NAACP branch; Julius T. Blair, principal speaker at the meeting and oldest businessman in Columbia, and Madison Jones, Administrative Assistant in the national office of the NAACP. Over $500 was raised at this meeting for the NAACP "Columbia Defense Fund." (Miller Photo)

Sat 5-11-46

No Violations of Civil Rights Found in Tennessee Race Riot

Post

Nashville, Tenn., June 14 (AP).—A Federal grand jury reported today after a two and one-half month investigation that it failed to find evidence of civil rights violations in the Columbia, Tenn., racial disturbance and in a report it assailed the "avowed Communist press" and pamphleteers for "inflammatory" articles on the affair.

Sat

The 3900-word report to Federal Judge Elmer D. Davies, much of which was based on evidence supplied by FBI investigators, declared that the circulation of "falsehoods and half truths" about the Columbia cases was a technique "designed to foster racial hatred and to array class against class."

6-15-46

Judge Davies himself in acknowledging their findings said the jurors action "should put an end to the irresponsible and scurrilous rumors that have been so freely circulated over the country and should be a reassurance to those of both the white and Negro races who sincerely desire to live together in peace and harmony."

390 Questioned

Washington

The jury questioned 390 witnesses but said there was nothing in their testimony to support charges of illegal search and seizure, brutality by arresting officers, undue detention of prisoners or wrongful use of the state highway patrol and the Tennessee state guard.

D.C.

The quick action of Governor Jim Mc ord in sending State forces from Nashville to Columbia, 45 miles away, the report said "prevented a bloody race war which threatened to arise out of the heat of excitement following the wounding of a number of officers of the law."

6-15-46 Sat

All possibilities of indicting those responsible for circulating "inflamatory articles" were explored but there was no Federal statute under which this could be done, the grand jurors told the court.

Clark Asked Inquiry

Washington

Attorney General Tom Clark reqquested the civil rights inquiry April 3, several weeks after the Columbia disorders in late February. Two Negroes were killed and 11 others, two of them Negroes, were wounded in two days of disturbances stemming from an argument between a white repairman and a Negro former soldier and his mother.

D.C.

A legal action by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is now in progress in Columbia whereby the NAACP seeks a court order invalidating indictments returned against 26 Negroes arrested following the affair. The NAACP contends that the indictments were voted by a prejudiced all-white grand jury.

Habeas Corpus Writs Filed For 34 In Tenn. Riot

Louisiana Weekly
New Orleans, La.
Sat 3-9-46

Nashville, Tenn., March 6.—Writs of habeas corpus seeking the release of 34 persons held in jail in connection with the rioting at Columbia, Tenn., Feb. 26, were filed by Maurice Weaver, NAACP attorney, on March 2. The writs were prepared by Weaver and Z. Alexander Looby of this city, who is a member of the NAACP national legal committee.

50

Walter White, NAACP secretary who flew here from New York, stated that although the Columbia situation is judged to be tense enough for the State guardsmen on duty to be doubled to a total strength of 1,000, 42 Negro prisoners who had been held in the Davidson County jail here were moved back to Columbia at 4 p. m. on March 1. This movement took place after two Negroes had been killed in the jail by State troopers Thursday afternoon, Feb. 28.

White is working with Looby and Weaver, planning for the legal defense of all persons under charges.

Sat 3-9-46

Defense Fund Sought

"This is no ordinary case," White said. "A first-hand look at the situation reveals even more outrageous handling than was indicated in newspaper stories. The killing of two prisoners in the jail and the wounding of another indicates what the Negro citizens of the small community of Columbia are up against. Unless they receive outside aid, unless the country is aroused to condemn the kind of thing that took place in Columbia, Negro citizens of small communities throughout the nation will be helpless.

"The NAACP intends to give the defendants complete and uncompromising legal defense, but because of the number involved and the broad issues, the fight will be an expensive one. We appeal for contributions to the defense of the Columbia, Tenn., victims from individuals and organizations throughout the country. Money should be sent to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, N. Y."

Sat 3-9-46

Attorney General Clark Orders Full Investigation

Chicago Defender

By VENICE T. SPRAGGS
(Defender Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON—The long arm of the U. S. Department of Justice was pointing toward anti-Negro terrorists of Columbia, Tenn., this week.

3-16-46

A full federal probe has been launched into the brutal "disciplining" of the town's entire colored population by city and state police after a group of Negro citizens had defied the efforts of a white mob to lynch a veteran of the U. S. Navy and his mother.

In a statement, issued last week. U. S. Attorney General Tom Clark promised that if any federal violations are uncovered by the government investigation, prosecution will follow.

Sat.

U. S. Attorneys Alerted

The attorney general said, "The civil rights of minorities in this country were never under greater threat than at this time," and has warned that, "human rights and civil liberties will be protected to the full extent of federal provisions wherever they are infringed."

122.

Clark stated, in view of the situation at Columbia, and its possible effect upon other areas, "I have called its special attention to the United States Attorneys." He added, "of course our policy is to prosecute any and all federal offenses."

A thorough investigation is in progress, and if any federal violations are uncovered. Clark stated, prosecutions will follow.

Hitting at the core of the Columbia fracas and other race incidents, Clark directed United States attorneys to give "special attention . . . to laxity or inefficiency of peace officers of any category."

Future Vigilance Asked

He said, "I am seeking to determine the causes of potential disorders, no matter how minor they seem . . . I desire that you acquaint peace and law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and local governmental authorities with the fact that every resource at my command will be used to prevent such outbreaks, and that when and if they do occur every effort will be made to prosecute those responsible."

The attorney general's directive to the U.S. attorneys follows:

"The civil rights of minorities in this country were never under greater threat than at this time. It is my purpose to protect human rights and civil liberties, wherever they are infringed, to the full extent of the Constitution and of statutory provisions.

"We have come thus far in the unsettled postwar period without great disorder. However, symptoms of increasing intolerance have been noted recently.

"It is my desire that you immediately devote special attention and investigation to protection of all Americans in their civil liberties, regardless of race or color. Special attention should be paid to laxity or inefficiency of peace officers of any category.

"I am seeking to determine the causes of potential disorders, no matter how minor they seem. In these days of rapid transmission of information, an outbreak in one locality might well inspire similar condition in another. I desire that you acquaint peace and law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and local governmental authorities with the fact that every resource at my command will be used to prevent such outbreaks, and that when and if they do occur every effort will be made to prosecute those responsible. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation will be used unsparingly to effect this end."

Atty.-General Wires Frierson To Act Now

Atlanta Daily World

Says Federal Jury Probe Needed; 'Deeply Concerned'

Georgia

Sunday

3-24-46

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(NNPA)—Attorney General Tom C. Clark, Friday directed United States Attorney Horace Frierson at Columbia. Tenn., to request immediately a federal jury investigation of the race riot at Columbia, February 25 and 26. The text of his telegram to Frierson follows: Sat.

'I am deeply concerned over charges which have been made to me that civil rights violations and possibly other federal violations which occurred at Columbia, Tenn at the time of the civil disturbances there on February 26 and 26. You are hereby directed to at once move the court in your district to convene a grand jury at the earliest possible time. I am anxious that all facts relating to these occurrences be fully presented to the grand jury make any additional grand jury make any additional investigations it may deem proper concerning this matter. Under my direction, a representative of the Department of Justice will appear to work with the grand jury. In this investigation, the usual cooperation of your office in expediting this matter, I know will be forthcoming."

Sunday

Some 100 persons already have called at the Justice Department to urge a thorough investigation of the disturbances. They represented religious, racial and labor groups. 3-23-46

Two Killed In Bloody Sequel To Tennessee Racial Disturbances

Birmingham News

Birmingham Ala.

Two Others Wounded In Fresh Columbia Flareup; Troops Are Reinforced

3-1-46 Fri.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 1—(AP)—State Guard reinforcements, called out after two Negroes were killed in a fresh outbreak of gun play, moved into Columbia today to join units hurried here earlier in the week when racial disorders flared up.

The Negroes were shot and two others, including a deputy sheriff, were wounded yesterday in the Maury County Jail where they had been taken for questioning in connection with riotous disturbances Monday night and early Tuesday.

They were among 100 persons arrested after the violence had been touched off by an altercation in which a Negro woman and her son were accused of assaulting a white man and the subsequent woundings of four policemen who went into the Negro-inhabited section known "Mink Slide." Fri. 3-1-46

* * *

STATE SAFETY COMMISSIONER LYNN BOMAR, one time All-American footballer at Vanderbilt, said the jail house shooting started when one of the Negroes seized a gun taken by authorities Tuesday in a house-to-house search. Sheriff J. J. Underwood said the confiscated weapons had been checked to make certain they were empty and that "we don't know where they got the ammunition."

Hours later Capt. Andrew Doyle, of the State Guard, said he was shot at when he and two city officers sought to arrest four Negroes, two women and two men wearing Army uniforms, reported to have stoned some white girls.

On the heels of these latest incidents the state's acting adjutant general, Hilton Butler, announced that additional guard units had been summoned to this Middle Tennessee town from five communities in the eastern part of the state.

* * *

BUTLER DID NOT SAY how many troops were involved in this call but it was understood reliably they number 250. Some 400 moved in at the direction of Gov. Jim McCord when the trouble first developed. Fri 3-2-46

Bomar asserted last night he did not believe "we've even scratched the surface in disarming the dangerous element of the city."

Meanwhile, 42 of the Negroes arrested in Columbia were taken in a huge trailer truck to the Davidson County Jail in Nashville, 40 miles away, for safekeeping.

Lynching Threat Is Cause

Journal & Guide

Norfolk, Va.

Men Jailed For Clash Released On $250 Bonds

Sat. 3.9.46

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — The federal government took a hand in affairs in this riot-torn town on Monday when members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation moved in to investigate racial clashes on Feb. 25 and 26 which resulted in the death of two Negroes and injuries to at least 12 other persons. FBI agents were sent in at the request of United States District Attorney Horace Frierson at Nashville. Tenn., it was disclosed, who said he wanted to find out if "there had been any violations of any federal statutes."

It was reported also on Monday that County Judge W. C. Whitthorne had granted a writ of habeas corpus for the release of Negro prisoners still held in jail here in connection with the racial troubles. The writ was granted after the posting of $250 bonds each for the men. A hearing was set on the case for Wednesday before Circuit Judge Joe N. Ingram at 10 a. m.

Swift spreading rumors that a lynching party was being formed to avenge the whites for the assault on William Fleming, white radio repairman, who was pushed through a plate glass window here Feb. 25 during an altercation between him. Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, over some work for them, were major factors in compelling Negroes to prepare for self protection by barricading themselves in their homes and firing on authorities who entered the section. Sat. 3.9.46

The riots in the Negro section at night Feb. 25 and 26 resulted in injuries to at least four policemen, three highway patrolmen, two white bystanders and one Negro. Sat. 3-9-46

Several outbreaks occurred in the Negro section of the city after 500 national guardsmen had been summoned to restore order. Three Negroes held for questioning were wounded Thursday last week in an office of the Maury county jail after one of them had shot Deputy Sherrif R. T. Darnell, wounding him in the left arm.

SERIOUSLY WOUNDED

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar, who reported the incident, said the prisoner used a rifle confiscated during the house to house search. He identified the wounded men as William F. Gordon, James Johnson, and Napoleon Stewart. Gordon and Johnson were said to be seriously wounded.

While in an office of the county jail for questioning, one of the men picked up a rifle from the stack of confiscated weapons in a corner of the room and without warning fired at Deputy Sheriff Darnell, it was reported.

Attracted by the shot, patrolmen in the adjoining room rushed into the office and subdued the men with gunfire. Mr. Bomar said that Gordon was "in very bad condition." Darnell said he saw one of the men pick up a gun and he started to take it from him when another man, whom he identified as Gordon, grabbed a gun and shot him.

All the property destruction occurred in the colored section. A TOTAL OF SEVENTY-FOUR PERSONS WERE ARRESTED. OF THAT NUMBER SEVENTY-THREE WERE COLORED. AND TWELVE WERE CHARGED WITH "ATTEMPTED MURDER."

A proclamation calling on "All citizens of all races" not to congregate and to preserve calm was issued late on Feb. 26 by Mayor Edridge Denham. He asked that the population be 'cool and sane" and that the white and colored people return to normal relations with each other. 3.9-46

A house-to-house search was made in a 30-square block area. The search reminiscent of the successful tallyho operation throughout Germany last summer—began with guardsmen, state police, deputized sheriffs and city police entering homes and busines places in search of weapons. Among the many confiscated was a German machine gun which a colored soldier was said to have sent home from Germany.

The search for weapons was ordered by Sheriff J. J. Underwood after it had been authorized by Governor Jim McCord. McCord came here to investigate the disorders. He called ATTORNEY GENERAL ROY H. BEELER OF TENNESSEE, WHO SAID SUCH A HOUSE-TO HOUSE SEARCH WAS LEGAL.

The colored section showed many signs of a violent battle. Not a store in the two block colored business area was intact. Plate glass windows were shattered and produce was knocked from shelves as beleaguered colored people scrambled for shelter from flying bullets.

Police opened up on colored people barricaded in their homes with machine-guns, scarring the inner and outer walls and breaking glass from windows.

Sheriff Underwood said he believed no trouble ever would have developed had it not been for the fact that "some colored people and whites were drunk and began shooting off their mouths."

LIQUOR SALE BANNED

Columbia is located in a county where sale of liquor is banned. Sale of beer is permitted, but its sale was stopped temporarily. Sat. 3-9-46

Late on Tuesday last week, Sheriff Underwood deputized sixty-six members of the state guard. The streets were virtually deserted except for uniformed men bent on maintaining order.

The trickle of traffic was directed by state patrolmen. The sidewalks were filled with National Guardsmen--some of them wearing shoulder patch insignia of the Fourth Armored and Ninetieth Infantry Divisions which fought in Europe.

Governor McCord promised that the guardsmen and state patrol would stay in the area as long as needed.

At a meeting of police and state officials Feb. 26, Underwood assured both colored and white people that the peace-enforcing squads would maintain order. Property and lives of both colored and white people alike will be protected, Lynn Bomar, head of the state guard, said.

CURFEW ORDERED

Martial law was not proclaimed, but a curfew was ordered after racial disorders had spread to nearby Mount Pleasant, twelce miles southwest of here, where two white men and a colored man engaged in a beer parlor brawl while discussing the Columbia riot.

Mayor Denham said there had not been a lynching in Columbia in twenty years. In 1927 a colored man was lynched after a jury had acquitted him on a charge of assaulting a white woman.

Most seriously injured in the disturbance was Officer Will Wilsford. He was hit in the mouth by a pistol bullet and was in critical condition. Others injured were given first aid and were not hospitalized.

Cal Lockeridge, one of the colored men arrested, said "We heard that a white man walked into a store and bought some rope. Sat. 3-9-46

"When the clerk asked him what he wanted it for, he said, 'we're going to hang some Negroes tonight.'

"We didn't like that. We didn't want to get killed. We heard two Negroes were hanged not long ago."

ALL STORES CLOSED

All stores in the colored district were closed Feb. 26, but most of the stores in the downtown white business district opened. Columbia has a population of 3,000 colored and about 8,000 whites.

After the altercation between Mrs. Stephenson, her son James, and Fleming, rumors quickly spread of "lynching parties" being formed. Colored people gathered in groups. Others barricaded themselves in stores and houses.

City policemen sent into the colored district were fired on and four were wounded. They called for help and thirty highway patrolmen under command of Bomar sped to the city from Nashville.

Armed with machine guns, they searched every building in a two-block colored business area. They fired through windows and barricaded colored persons refused to surrender. Some colored persons returned the gunfire.

THE UPPER SOUTH

New York Times

Racial Frictions Less Acute Than Had Been Predicted

N.Y.

By VIRGINIUS DABNEY

RICHMOND, March 2—This week's interracial clash at Columbia, Tenn., is the only one of importance in the South since the Axis surrendered, and observers of race relations are pleased that things have been proceeding on such an even keel. Some had feared that with the return of the Negro soldiers in large numbers there would be more serious friction. Sun. 3-3-46

Thus far practically nothing of the sort has happened. Although the number of returning Negro service men is far larger than it was a quarter of a century ago, and although these men have been accorded many rights and privileges not normally granted them in the South, they have been living quietly for the most part, and few evidences of antagonism have been shown.

One reason for this may lie in the fact that they feel the lot of Southern Negroes has improved during their absence. Such things as abolition of poll taxes, equalization of teachers' salaries in the public schools, employment of Negro policemen in the Negro sections of Southern cities and appointment of Negroes to positions of trust by Southern Governors and Mayors have served to lessen tensions. Sun 3-3-46

Ten persons, including four white policemen, were wounded in the Columbia, Tenn., outbreak on Monday night and Tuesday morning. Two Negroes were killed in a shooting affray inside the Maury County jail on Thursday, where they were among approximately 100 Negroes who had been arrested in connection with the earlier disorders. A white deputy sheriff and another Negro were wounded in Thursday's battle.

GRAND JURY ENDS INQUIRY INTO RIOT

Birmingham Age-Herald

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 21—(AP)—The Maury County Grand Jury completed a two-day investigation of recent racial disorders this afternoon and State's Atty. Paul F. Bumpus said the results of its investigation would be made public tomorrow morning. Ala.

Bumpus indicated that there might be some indictments in connection with the disturbances, which resulted in the death of two persons and injury of several others between last Feb. 25 and 28.

The Grand Jury today heard members of the State Highway Patrol which led a raid on the Mink Slide Negro section of Columbia Feb. 26 and arrested a large number of the more than 100 Negroes held as a result of the racial trouble. Fri-3-22-46

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35 Men Are Indicted For Racial Disorders

Ala.

Montgomery Advertiser

COLUMBIA, TENN., March 22.—(AP)—Thirty-one Negroes and four white men were indicted today by the Maury County Grand Jury on charges ranging from assault with intent to commit murder, to carrying dangerous and deadly weapons in connection with racial disturbances last month. Sat.

The grand jury returned 11 indictments, listing several persons in more than one indictment.

Grand Jury Foreman J. D. Stanfill told Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram the jury had investigated more than 100 cases and had "just about completed" its inquiry into the disorders in which two persons were killed and several wounded. 3-23-46

In Washington Atty. Gen. Tom Clark has called for a Federal Grand Jury investigation of the disturbances to determine whether civil rights had been violated.

Several White Persons Held In Columbia Riot

Montgomery Ala. Advertiser

COLUMBIA, TENN., March 1—(AP)—Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus said tonight several white men have been arrested in connection with racial disorders here in which two Negroes have been killed and 12 other persons wounded.

Bumpus declined to say how many white men had been arrested or what charges had been preferred against them, but said "we have some definite leads on some white people for inciting the Negroes." Sat 3-2-46

Meanwhile, he said he was continuing his investigation of the approximately 100 Negroes jailed since Monday on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with intent to commit murder.

FBI Will Investigate Columbia Race Riots

Montgomery Advertiser

Alabama

COLUMBIA, TENN., March 4—(AP)—The Federal Bureau of Investigation moved in here today to investigate racial troubles which resulted in the death of two Negroes and the wounding of 12 other persons here last week. Tues 3-5-46

Horace Frierson, United States District Attorney at Nashville, said FBI agents had been sent to Columbia at his request "for the purpose of determining whether or not there had been any violations of any federal statutes."

He added: "The agents are now in Columbia engaged in this investigation."

Protests Rise On Anti-Negro Violence Wave

Daily Worker

New York, N.Y

Fri 3-1-46

Protests against the wave of anti-Negro violence spreading throughout the land yesterday began to flood the Department of Justice and the White House.

Most of the messages dealt with the machine gun assault against 3,000 Negro residents of Columbia, Tenn., Monday night, and the Freeport, L. I., police slaying of Pfc. Charles Ferguson and his brother Alfonzo, Feb. 5.

The Greater New York CIO Council in a resolution said of the Ferguson case:

"It is part of a national pattern of police killings of Negro veterans who stand up for democratic rights they fought for overseas.

"History has proved that attacks on the Negro people have always ended in persecution of labor. It is not a long step from shooting of Negro veterans to machine-gunning picket lines."

The Council urged its affiliates to protest the Freeport grand jury whitewash of patrolman Joseph Romeika and "to demand that he be suspended and tried for murder."

Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, wired Attorney General Tom Clark and Tennessee's Gov. Jim McCord:

"We urge the Department of Justice to institute an immediate investigation from Washington of action by Tennessee highway patrolmen, militia and other peace officers at Columbia, Tennessee . . . who invaded Negro section, searched homes of Negroes without warrants and shot indiscriminately into such homes as refused to answer summons at door." Fri 3-1-46

Rose Gaulden, chairman of the Lincoln-Douglass club of the Harlem Communist Party, last night wired Gov. Dewey and President Truman on the Tennessee and Freeport violence. The wire to the White House called for "personal denunciation" of the killers who, she said, have gone unchallenged by the President.

George Marshall, chairman of the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, wired Attorney General Tom Clark and Tennessee Gov. Jim McCord. He urged **"vigorous and effective action against lawless anti-Negro acts of local police in Columbia. Safety of Negro people and security of constitutional rights for everyone depends upon what you do."**

Two Negroes Slain In Columbia Jail

Montgomery Ala.

Advertiser

Gunplay Occurs After Deputy Is Wounded

Fri 3-1-46

COLUMBIA, TENN., Feb. 28.—(AP)—Two Negroes were wounded fatally and two other persons, including a deputy sheriff, were shot in Maury County jail today in an aftermath of racial disorders earlier in the week.

The Negroes, who died en route to a Nashville hospital, were among 100 persons held following a violent outbreak which started Monday night and was climaxed in a dawn foray Tuesday into the Negro-populated section by squads of State Highway patrolmen, backed by 400 State Guardsmen.

The trouble here arose from an incident Monday in which a Negro woman and her son were accused of pushing a white man through a plate glass window of a radio repair shop on the public square.

Four Columbia policemen were wounded when they went into the Negro section, known as "Mink Slide," Monday night and Gov. Jim McCord, at the behest of Sheriff J. J. Underwood, ordered State Guard units into Columbia from seven Tennessee communities.

Additional guardsmen have been ordered to Columbia "for availability and as replacements." Fri 3-1-46

Lynn Bomar, state safety commissioner who was an All-America football end at Vanderbilt in 1923, identified the Negroes killed today as William Gordon and James Johnson.

They were shot, Bomar said, after one of the Negroes seized a rifle confiscated Tuesday in a house-to-house search and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood said all confiscated weapons had been checked twice to make sure they were not loaded. "We don't know where they got the ammunition," he said.

"I had just finished telling them I was going to let them out on a small bond—around $250," Underwood added, because we didn't consider them leaders" in the disorders.

Three Negroes Held in Jail Are Wounded

Times-Dispatch

Richmond, Va.

Fri 3-1-46

Deputy Sheriff Shot During New Uprising

COLUMBIA, TENN., Feb. 28—(AP)—Three Negroes held for questioning in connection with racial disorders were wounded in an office of the Maury County jail today.

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar said the Negroes were shot by highway patrolmen after one of the Negroes seized a rifle confiscated Tuesday in a house-to-house search, and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell, wounding him in the left arm.

Bomar identified the Negroes as William F. Gordon, James Johnson and Napoleon Stewart. Gordon and Johnson were seriously wounded, he added.

Two of the Negroes were in a serious condition.

Bomar gave this account of the shooting:

The Negroes had been brought into an office of the county jail for questioning, when suddenly one of them picked up a rifle from the stack of confiscated weapons in a corner of the room and fired at Darnell.

The shot attracted patrolmen in the next room. They dashed in and downed the Negroes with gunfire.

Fired Two Shots

Bomar said that Gordon and Johnson were removed to a hospital and that Gordon "is in very bad condition." The commissioner said the Negroes fired two shots before they were felled by patrolmen.

Darnell said he saw one of the Negroes pick up a gun and he started around a table to take it from him when another grabbed a gun and shot him. He identified his assailant as Gordon.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood said the three Negroes had been questioned concerning the disorders here Monday and Tuesday "and we were getting ready to release them" when the trouble started.

The sheriff said about 25 additional Negroes had been jailed earlier today, but that "about a dozen" had been released after questioning. He said the total jailed in connection with the disorders now stood at approximately 100. Fri 3-1-46

Ten persons, including four city patrolmen, were wounded in sporadic shootings Monday night and Tuesday as a result of racial friction which Sheriff J. J. Underwood said grew out of an altercation Monday between a Negro woman and her son, and a white man.

The sheriff said the two Negroes pushed the white man through a plate glass window on the public square.

State guardsmen and highway patrolmen were ordered into Columbia Monday night by Governor Jim McCord. They are still on duty in the city.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Rev. Lockridge Is Pastor Of Baptist Church In County

Nashville Globe

Fri 4-5-46 Nashville, Tenn

56a

Leading officials of the Tennessee Missionary Baptist Convention who live in Nashville were somewhat surprised to find out that the grand jury at Columbia actually had indicted one of the active pastors affiliated with the convention, in connection with the troubles caused by the threatened mob invasion of the Negro section of the city on February 25. This week when announcement was made that the best known Negro citizens of Columbia were indicted and would be tried for attempted murder, the news item listed the Rev. Calvin Lockridge among those for whom murder convictions would be sought.

Civilian

Rev. Lockridge is pastor of Mt. Ararat Baptist Church in Maury County, and one of the most active of the young pastors in that section. This fact was confirmed by the Rev. S. H. Simpson, secretary of the Stone River District Association, who recalls that in one of the biggest financial drives in Columbia last year, at which Rev. Simpson preached, Rev. Lockridge was active in the successful effort to raise the money with which to purchase a valuable piece of proyerty located in the "Mink Slide" section.

Tenn

Another Nashvillian who is even better acquainted with the young Rev. Lockridge, is Rev. J. B. Ridley, secretary of the State Convention and also moderator of the Maury County District Association. Rev. Ridley, who is pastor of Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Nashville, recalled the past week that it was in a meeting which he conducted many years ago that young Calvin Lockridge was converted. Both Rev. Simpson and Rev. Ridley were quite interested in the information that reached here from reliable sources, revealing what it was that put Rev. Lockridge in Columbia Law's dragnet. It is a story that does not cause any strong belief that equal justice under law has been practiced by the officials of the Maury County Court.

Fri 4-5-46

It is stated that, Rev. Lockridge like most citizens in the city and county had fire arms in his home; that he was among other colored citizens who on the night of February 25 became convinced that there would be mob violence and had determined to protect his family if possible. The report is that the gun the day when uniformed was a weapon that had been put in his charge by a white friend to be repaired. Rev. Lockridge had the gun the da vwhen uniformed men came to the city and made wholesale arrests of Negro citizens who had firearms in their homes.

56a

Where the law is considered to have been partial in its efforts to "preserve law and order," is seen in the fact that although white persons carrying arms and roving the streets of Columbia went unmolested, colored citizens, even in then homes, were subjected to search and seizure, in plain violation of the Constitution of the United States.

Rev. Lockridge was not only among the close to one hundred colored citizens who were arrested, lodged in jail and held incommunicado, but was also among the number spirited from Columbia to the Nashville jail when the Columbia jail became too crowded. Rev Lockridge has stated that the only deed of kindness done for him during the horror week following his arrest was by police and jail officials in Nashville. The men confined to the Maury County jail were subjected to downright cruel treatment, it is said, and those brought to Nashville were also subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment while being brought to the city in a large truck.

Fri 4-5-46

But it is stated when the truck reached the Davidson County line local officials took charge of the men and not only treated them kindly while carrying them to the jail, but advised them that no harm would be done them if they made no resistance to the officers.

Rev. Lockridge and the other men with him state that they were more than surprised to find that Davidson County officials had provided each of the men with a nice bed at the jail, with two clean sheets for each bed. All of them were sorry when they were taken from Nashville back to the miserable quarters of the Maury County jail.

Rev. Lockridge tells the same story that has been told by the other leaders who were put in jail at Columbia. It is a story of abject fear that their own lives and the lives of their families were in danger and fear of not being able to get any protection from the officials of the county. All the leaders who went to their homes and business places and armed themselves the night of February 25, felt that this action was about all they could do that might have an effect on the mob that had gathered and from whom boasts had come of intended lynchings.

Rev. Lockridge and the other leaders got their biggest shock when they were subjected to arrest and imprisonment merely for setting up a defense against mob violence, they have stated.

It was believed in Nashville by many who kept up with what went on in Columbia, that after subjecting scores of Negroes to arrest the officials would not press charges any further and that the attorney general would not press for indictments against any persons except those against whom he might have evidence of having done some shooting. But this week it appears that the officials will go through with a sincere effort to cinvict the aged Julius Blair, his sons, Undertaker Morton, young Martin, the grocer, and also Rev. Calvin Lockridge on the charge of attempted murder. It is not known how the officials can hope to produce evidence that will support the charges made in the indictments. But it seems certain there are to be long drawn out trials on the charges. Fri 4-5-46

As was to be expected, Attorneys Maurice Weaver, Alexander Z. Looby and Thurgood Marshall, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, have challenged the validity of each and every indictment that has been returned against Rev. Lockridge and his associates. The challenge is that an all white grand jury returned the indictments in a county where the persistent practice is to deny to Negroes their right to serve on grand juries. The intention is to appeal any conviction of the men to higher courts to the Supreme Court of the United States, if it becomes necessary. The Supreme Court has repeatedly set aside convictions from counties where Negroes are kept off juries because of their race.

Each of the men arrested and jailed at Columbia has been released on bond, it was revealed this week. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has furnished the bonds, which in the principal cases have been five thousand dollars each.

Next Monday three attorneys, designated by Attorney General Tom C. Clark, will come to Tennessee and go before a Federal Grand jury with evidence believed to implicate Columbia officials in acts that violated the Federal Constitution and Civil Rights Statutes. It will be one of the most unusual spectacles ever seen anywhere in the United States—that of state and county officials conducting a trial of Negroes charged with felonies and a Federal Grand Jury conducting a probe of the facts of some of the officials connected with the arrest of the Negroes.

Mrs. Roosevelt Co-Head Of Big 'Riot' Committee

The People's Voice

New York, N.Y.

56a

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Channing H. Tobias are co-chairmen of a national committee organized under the sponsorship of the NAACP to mobilize support for the victims of the riot in Columbia, Tenn., it was announced this week by the NAACP, which is completing plans for the legal defense of some 100 Negroes who were arrested following the con- fli

3-30-46

Meanwhile, it was learned that the county grand jury at Columbia last week returned indictments charging 31 Negroes and four white men with offenses ranging from attempted murder to carrying dangerous weapons.

Tenn

A total of 28 Negroes were charged with attempted murder and three others were charged with attempt to commit a felony. The names of the four white men were not revealed.

Civilian

TOM CLARK DISTURBED

Attorney General Tom C. Clark wired U. S. Attorney Horace Frierson at Columbia, last week, that he was **"deeply concerned"** over possible violations of civil rights and other laws and directed Frierson to ask for a Federal grand jury at the earliest possible time.

The two aspects of the case, said Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, are the adequate legal defense of the Negroes charged with criminal offenses and the arousing of public opinion to bring the guilty parties to justice and to prevent such occurrences from **"becomng the pattern to be [illegible]ed by other communities throughout the nation."**

A series of mass meetings is being planned in 15 key cities, the NAACP head said, and smaller gatherings are planned in a score of other cities. Ollie Harrington, PV cartoonist, has been engaged by the NAACP to head up a special publicity project on the Columbia case.

A delegation of 15 students, representing 63 campus branches of the American Youth for Democracy, lodged a protest with the Department of Justice last week. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ also sent a resolution to the department and the governor of Tennessee urging a full Federal investigation. 3-3-46

CIO BOARD ACTS

The CIO executive board condemned the evidence of police brutality shown by Tennessee police authorities. Its resolution stated that similar vicious anti-labor practices have been the vogue in the cities of Chicago and Los Angeles, adding: **"These are not isolated instances without relation to each other. Each unpunished act of police brutality is an encouragement to the same pattern of conduct elsewhere."**

In Washington recently 54 organizations convened and adopted a resolution condemning the incident in Tennessee as a **"growing pattern by state and local police to deprive citizens of their fundamental constitutional rights. These are danger signs,"** the resolution added, **"that America must heed, upon which all America must act."**

Two Slain As Race Rioters Terrorize Tennessee Town

Chicago Defender, Ill.

3-9-46

(See Photos, Page 12)

COLUMBIA — This Tennessee town's fiery lynch-fever dropped this week as two Negro prisoners died from gun shots in Maury County jail.

56a

The bloody 16-hour "white supremacy" riot raged to an end here with "Mink Slide" gutted, looted and more than 100 Negro leaders locked in jail.

Helmeted state guardsmen with war weapons who had machine-gunned the 3,[illegible]00 Negroes in a barricaded block patroled the town as colored communities remained virtually under martial law.

Touch-off of Tennessee's worst terror reign in a decade came last week when a white proprietor of a radio repair store, William Fleming, kicked a Negro woman, Mrs. Grace Stevenson.

When her 19-year-old son, James C. Stevenson, a three-year Navy veteran, struck the radio man in defense of his mother, rumors of riots filled the town and in the evening a white mob gathered for an attack on "Mink Slide," the colored section.

Attack Negro Area

Fleming's brother is Flo Fleming, a state patrolman and a Democratic candidate for sheriff.

After a withering attack by a mob of white hoodlums, city policemen armed with sub-machine guns tore into barricaded Negro stores and houses on E. 8th st. Four policemen sent into the Negro district were reported wounded by return fire.

Civilian

Sat.

By early morning the hollow here which is the haven of the Negro community had been blasted and torn repeatedly by police attacks.

3-9-46

Meanwhile 500 State militiamen and highway patrolmen deputized by Sheriff J. J. Underwood began a house-to-house ransacking of the Negro district in search of firearms.

During the night of fierce fighting more than 10 persons were reported wounded and 70 arrests were made. Sixty-eight of those arrested were Negroes. No attacks were made on the white community. Later arrests mounted to 101, only three of whom were white.

Ends Brotherhood Week

Thus the first large-scale post-war riot broke here suddenly upon the heels of National Brotherhood Week.

The sweeping arrests of all Negro leaders followed the release of Mrs. Stevenson and her son upon $3,500 bail gathered by Negro merchants in the district.

Victims of the county jail shooting were William Gordon and James Johnson, who were turned away from Columbia's lily-white hospital and died enroute to a Jim Crow hospital in Nashville.

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar declared that Gordon and Johnson were shot after one of them seized a rifle confiscated in the house-to-house search, and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm. Another Negro, Napoleon Stewart, was wounded in the firing which followed.

Blasts Killing

Blasting the killing of Gordon and Johnson, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People charged that the slaying was "further example of lawlessness on the part of Tennessee law enforcement officers. As matters now stand no Negro in that area has the semblance of constitutional rights."

Only reports of arrests of white men were given by Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul E. Bumpus who declined to say how many white men had been arrested or what charges had been preferred against them. Bumpus sadi: "We have some definite leads on some white people for inciting the Negroes."

Fight Indictment

3-9-46

While Columbia's officials announced their intention of indicting the jailed Negroes, many of whom had been taken to Nashville and surrounding counties for "safety" from Columbia mobs, national leaders prepared an all-out fight to prevent mass frame-up of those arrested.

Walter White, secretary of the NAACP who flew to Nashville, stated that writs of habeas corpus seeking the release of 34 persons held in jail in connection with the rioting were filed by Maurice Weaver, white NAACP attorney and by Z. Alexander Looby, member of the NAACP legal committee.

"This is no ordinary case," White said. "A firsthand look at the situation reveals even more outrageous handling than was indicated in newspaper stories. The killing of two prisoners in the jail and the wounding of another indicates what the Negro citizens of the small community of Columbia are up against. Unless they receive outside aid, unless the country is aroused to condemn the kind of thing that took place in Columbia, Negro citizens of small communities throughout the nation will be helpless."

Blame Victims

3-9-46

White said that there was deliberate vandalism by the militia sent in supposedly to keep order. The office of Dr. F L. Hawthorne, at 106 E. 8th st., in Columbia, was wrecked. The troopers went in and deliberately smashed all the furniture and equipment in the office of this respected physician. The office of a Negro insurance company across the street from Dr. Hawthorne was completely destroyed with its furniture broken and its files overturned.

White revealed that there is a plot now to place the responsibility for the rioting entirely on Negroes. Whites are claiming that Negroes have been plotting "an uprising" for about six months. It was also revealed that James Stephenson, son of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson who had the argument with the white radio repairman, is a Navy veteran, recently discharged. The repairman is also an ex-sailor.

R. S. Hopkins, a prominent and wealthy white lawyer in Nashville was one of the persons who signed the bonds for the release of Julius, Charles, and Sol Blair, Cal Lockridge, and James Morton, all prominent Negro businessmen in Columbia. Other signers of bonds were Martin Payne, Julius Blair, and James Morton, all colored.

Tapped Phones

3-9-46

Meanwhile national organizations pitched into the fight to free the Negro leaders despite the bitter opposition of Columbia officials who attacked "outside agitators" and announced they had tapped the phones of prominent Negroes to check all incoming calls.

In an open telegram to Tennessee's Gov. James McCord, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare demanded the prosecuting of members of the white mob and the release of all prisoners not charged with crime.

"We have just won a war in which Negro and white Americans fought side by side for democracy and the rights of minorities. Into every American community, South and North, Negro veterans are returning who, like James Stephenson, have grown away from the home pattern of race relations and had a taste of democracy they were called upon to defend. The reintegration of these men into civilian life presents a tremendous challenge to the moral conscience of America and our democratic ideals."

Latimer in Dixie

Sat.

Ira Latimer, head of Chicago's Civil Liberties Committee arrived in Memphis and after contacting leaders here urged a bombardment of Tennessee's governor and other national officials with telegrams of protest against the mass arrests.

He reported that the significance of the case was centered around the candidacy of Sheriff Underwater, who is backed by Columbia's Negro community.

The Civil Liberties chief stated that he had found the hands of Flo Fleming heavily bandaged from beatings he had given to Negroes during the riot.

Opposing Underwater is Flo Fleming, an outspoken anti-Negro leader whose brother touched off the Columbus riot. Latimer warned that unless liberal organizations backed the jailed victims of the riot they were in danger of a "legal lynching."

Tennessee Race Trouble Ends As State Highway Patrolmen Appear

Atlanta Daily World

Atlanta, Ga.

COLUMBIA, Tenn.,—(SNS)— A clash between Negro and white residents of this city was declared ended Tuesday after a night of bloodshed and the arrival of 500 state Highway patrolmen.

The rioting was reparted the result of an altercation between a woman and her son and a white Navy Veteran.

Wed 2-27-46

Seven persons were wounded and considerable property "shot up" during the disorder. Among them were four city policemen, two white men and one Negro.

The highway patrolmen raided a two-block Negro business area known as the "mink Slide" area. Persons arrested included 65 Negroes, 12 of them charged with attempted murder." Varied weapons, including six double-barreled shotguns, nine single-barreled shotguns, nine rifles, one German machine gun and numerous pistols and knives, were taken from arrested Negroes. The patrolmen, armed with machine guns, raided the Negro section, fired through windows when persons refused to open barricaded doors and answered reported potshots from within.

Two other white men, indentified as Borgia Claude and James Beard, ventured beyond the State guard cordon into the Mink Slide sector and were stot in the legs by a blast from a roof sniper. They were not hurt seriously.

PEOPLE REASSURED

Lynn Bomar, state public safety director and former All-American football player, led the highway patrol into Columbia. He toured the Negro residential area Tuesday forenoon, broadcasting through a loud speaker that "We are going to give you folks the same kind of protection as the people on the other side of town (whites.)" He was quoted further as saying, "There is not going to be any trouble; everything is all right."

Touring in an open command car, accompanied by Brig., General Jacob M. Dickerson, commander of the Second Brigade, Tenn., State Guard, Bomar called out: "Let me see you smile; come on, smile. We're going to get things straightened out."

Persons were not permitted to go to work Tuesday. All stores in the Negro district were closed but most of the stores in the downtown white business district opened.

RAID "MINK SLIDE"

Wed 2-27-46

The police raided "Mink Slide" at dawn Tuesday, taking into custody 12 of the alleged ring leaders of the uprising. The others were arrested in the following raids of the neighborhood.

Columbia, which has a population of 3,000 Negroes and about 8,000 whites, recorded its last lynching 20 years ago, in 1927, when a man was hanged on the Courthouse steps for allegedly attacking a white woman. Rumors that lynching parties were being formed and that rope for the purpose was being purchased at a hardware store swept through the Negro areas.

Race relations between Negroes and whites had always been excellent, according to Mayor Denham. He denied reports of tenseness between the two races. However, he stated that "only last week our Negro citizens voluntarily raised $4,000 for a new school here."

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2 Negroes Killed In Tennessee Jail

Washington Tribune, D.C.

Tues 3-5-46

Tension in Columbia mounted greatly yesterday with the slaying of William Gordon and James Johnson, two of the prisoners held incommunicado in the Maury County jail.

Following what authorities termed an outburst of gunplay, during which another prisoner and a deputy sheriff were wounded 42 others of the more than 100 held were transferred to the Davidson County jail at Nashville for safekeeping.

Shot With Unloaded Gun

Although Sheriff J. J. Underwood said that all confiscated weapons had been checked twice to make certain that they were unloaded, it was said that the gunplay began when one prisoner seized a confiscated weapon and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm.

Patrolmen outside the room in which the confiscated weapons were stored rushed in and began shooting. The prisoner wounded was identified as Napoleon Stewart. Gordon, according to Darnell, was the man who shot him.

According to Sheriff Underwood, the men had been taken into the room to be told that they were to be released under a small bond of $350 "because we didn't consider them leaders in the disorders."

FBI Launches Investigation

A full-fledged investigation of the racial disturbances which have gripped Columbia for the past several days was launched Wednesday by U.S. Attorney Horace Frierson on orders of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The probe, authorized by J. Edward Hoover, followed a charge by Walter White, NAACP secretary, that activities of State Guardsmen and highway patrolmen in the searching of colored citizens' homes for weapons, was a direct violation of the U.S. Constitution.

Tues 3-5-46

Hysteria swept the community following the arrest Monday night of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, after they had allegedly pushed a white clerk in a radio repair shop through a plate glass window.

When it was learned that the mother and son were released under $3,000 bail, whites armed with shotguns began gathering and moving toward the colored section, called Mink Slide.

The town of 12,000 was immediately thrown into riotous disorder, resulting in four policemen and ten civilians being shot and the arrest of 70 persons, before order was restored.

Wage Discrimination Cause

Although the Stephenson incident was given by Sheriff J. J. Underwood as the spark which set off the disturbances, local observers expressed the opinion that the real cause for resentment was the wide wage differentials between white and colored workers in the nearby Monsato chemical plant.

The wage issue was the real motive for resentment, it was admitted by plant workers and Jennings Perry, editor of the Nashville Tennesseean, who said:

"For some time we have all known that colored people were receiving lower wages than white people for the same work at the Mansota plant."

It was upon the orders of Gov. James McCord that 400 State Guardsmen and 100 highway patrolmen, were moved swiftly into Columbia to form a tight ring about the colored section.

All automobiles, buses and trains entering the area were checked by patrolmen, who, with the militia, were virtually the only persons remaining on the streets.

The entire colored business district, a block on E. Eighth St., after having been wrecked by gunfire, was closed to traffic and under constant patrol by members of the State Guard.

Columbia Victim Charges State Officials Led Terror

Daily Worker New York, N.Y

Times 4-30-46

Julius Blair, 76-year-old Negro businessman of Columbia, Tenn., yesterday told his story of the attack on the night of Feb. 25, when a mob led by state highwaymen demolished two city blocks of Negro homes in the Tennessee community. Blair, who is under indictment with 30 others on charges of "attempted murder," declared that "state officials" directly organized the attack. He told his story at a press conference at the New York headquarters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In quiet, unemotional tones, Blair told reporters how his drug store was smashed by the lynch vandals, and how other shops in the area were similarly destroyed.

He told how he had learned, on the afternoon of Feb. 25, that Mrs. Stephenson and her veteran son, Jimmy, had been assaulted by a white radio repair shop man. He went down to the jail to bail them out.

"I posted bail for mother and son," said Blair, "and had them released. Shortly thereafter, the mob went to the jail with the intention of lynching."

Blair described then how he closed his shop in order to get everyone home. On returning home, he learned of his son's arrest and he went to bail him out.

"But they claimed they couldn't set a bail" Blair said quietly.

Utilizing his constitutional rights, he then went to City Hall to see the district Attorney. On his way there he was arrested by a state highwayman. Though released on reaching City Hall, he was given a typical runaround by the Da's office, whom he never got to see. Shortly thereafter he was jailed for "attempted murder."

Times 4-30-46

Also at the press conference was James T. Bellafont, a Negro veteran, who is indicted in Columbia for "attempted murder in the first degree, an accessory before and after the fact, and having a weapon."

Walter White, national secretary of the NAACP, opened the conference.

The 31 indicted victims, of whom Julius Blair is representative, are touring the country to raise funds for the legal defense of these victims, and to tell the story of the Tennessee events.

The NAACP at 20 West 40th St. is soliciting funds for their legal defense, as is the Committee of Prominent citizens in Tennessee, 212½ Union St., Nashville, Tenn.

Woman Reveals Truth As Riot Trial Opens

Chicago Defender, Ill.

4-13-46

(Defender Washington Bureau)

WASHINGTON—For the first time since the Columbia, Tenn., outrage of Feb. 25 that shocked the nation, the wife of one of the 31 Negroes indicted on framed-up charges told her story to newspapermen this week.

The woman, attractive Mrs. Mary M. Morton, wife of James E. Morton, now free on bail, also told her story to an NAACP mass meeting here, appearing before 700 persons with Channing Tobias, Judge William Hastie and Atty. E. C. Hayes, president of the local branch.

Though not jailed, Mrs. Morton, mother of three children, suffered abuse and indignities at the hands of State Highway patrolmen and members of the Tennessee National Guard who were in Columbia ostensibly to restore order and protect Negro citizens.

Her story followed faithfully the version given the press by two other Negroes from Columbia, the Rev. Clavin Lockridge and Saul W. Blair, however, she disclosed a number of sidelights not previously published. 4-13-46

During the 24 hours her husband was held in custody, Mrs. Norton was held prisoner in her home. She was not permitted even to answer the telephone.

It was she who drove one of the fatally wounded men to Nashville for medical aid. The victim, a man named Boyd, died en route.

In addition to the undertaking parlor that was reduced to a shambles by police vandalism, the Morton home was torn up by Highway police who stole jewelry and other values and confiscated two weapons—a .22 calibre pistol that could not be fired and a .38 kept in a dresser but never used.

When state police invaded the Negro district bent on destruction and terror Mrs. Morton was acting as secretary for a group making plans for the erection of a new Negro high school.

Denied a new building, the Negro citizens finally persuaded the county to erect a new structure if they purchased the land. This has been done, the Negroes having just purchased a $4,800 plot.

The First Baptist Church in the Negro district had to secure a permit from the police to hold services on the Sunday following the riot.

A white man, identifying himself as a reporter for one of the national news services, played a sinister role in the reign of terror. He actively took part in the destruction of the Morton funeral parlor. He questioned Mrs. Morton on its location and led police to the scene.

The police, who openly robbed cash registers and safes in the businesses they wrecked, foiled

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Some Change Seen by Tubbs

Afro-American

Baltimore, Md.

Publicity Believed Favorable Factor

STORIES VARY

Proof of Whites' Guilt Held Simple

5-18-46

By VINCENT TUBBS

AFRO Staff Correspondent

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Although conditions here have been improved as a result of the law enforcement pogrom and the subsequent nation-wide attention given the community, tension in this town is still high, an investigation has revealed.

That things have been "made better" for the mistreated residents is apparently the result of the entire nation's desire to avert similar recurrences of the racial disturbance which lasted from Feb. 25 to Feb. 28.

Served Immediately

Women seeking to purchase things in local downtown stores now get immediate service when clerks see them standing. Before they could wait all day for what the clerks cared.

White folk no longer frequent the business section at the foot of a hill and a stone's throw from the town's main drag.

Only those on business — strictly business — venture here.

Before one could hardly walk the street for them.

Recess Regretted

The only thing that worries this correspondent, and I can't truthfully say it's worrying Columbians, is that unless somebody is punished, my faith in justice will be forever dead.

The rub seems to be that the Federal Grand Jury which sat to hear testimony that might have led to indictments of some 30-odd persons alleged to have participated in the debacle has recessed until May 27, pending an FBI investigation.

Victims Exonerated

It should be recorded for posterity that the "incident" here was not a race riot. It was not an uprising of indignant colored people. It was more a matter of self-defense, so far as the colored people are concerned.

For my money, it was the first blow-off of nation-wide white fear of an anticipated effort on the part of colored people to assert their human rights.

An Early Post-War Issue

The connection is vague, and largely original, but the most discussed subject among whites after V-J Day was not winning the peace but stemming an anticipated colored uprising.

Time and time again, this writed sought to point out that while some Tan Yanks were saying "I'm not gonna take it when I get home," more whites were worried about whether the Tan Yanks would be willing to revert to the pre-war jim crow status quo.

Nation's Fear

One of the questions most often asked after my return to the States was, "Where do you think the first one will occur?"

No answer was attempted but, for my money, the Columbia incident was the blow-off that set Washington and all the nation to thinking seriously and doing something quickly to avoid recurrences.

However, in Columbia today there is still something of tenseness in the air — minute, but there just the same.

Reason for Improvement

Responsible in no small measure for the general improvement have been the frequent visits of obviously "foreign" colored persons like myself.

In addition, it is known generally that numerous FBI men are on duty in the area and it is conceivable that Columbia whites may feel that their misconduct has brought the wrath of the Gods down upon them.

Questionable Incidents

On the other hand, some queerish things happen in the township occasionally.

A bus driver turned up one morning, professing that a white man had robbed him, ostensibly as a carry-over of the outbreak. The next day, however, he denied having been robbed, saying he'd been told to make such a statement.

The significance of this is still unknown but the guy is now on the county road "doing time."

A trio of cars returning to Nashville from Tuskegee scurried through the town on another morning recently and one — with Illinois license — was halted and the driver questioned as to whether or not she was in the town to investigate the incident.

Pamphlet Held Responsible

Reportedly responsible for failure of the Federal Grand Jury to make public its findings is a pamphlet circulated by the Southern Conference on Human Welfare which revealed untold tales about the debacle and carried pictures as proof.

It is held by Presiding Judge Elmer Davies, a Tennessean, that the jury must consider the pamphlet's contents so as to reach its conclusion on the basis of a "full, fair and impartial investigation."

The FBI, so reports Morris Cunningham of the Memphis Commercial Appeal, is summoning and questioning witnesses "relative to reported destruction of property and circulation of erroneous publications."

FBI's Job Easy

The FBI should have no difficulty in determining that some of the 75 highway patrolmen and 800 State guardsmen wrought havoc in Morton's Funeral Home, Blair's Drug Store and a nearby barbershop.

Morton's is where the casket had the KKK painted on it and embalming fluid was poured into display caskets. Blair's was wrecked.

Officers shot up the walls and chairs of the barbership, besides tearing away all the outer appendages of all establishments in the area.

Fear of Whites Cited

Frank Ballantine, an old Tennessean, evaluating results, says the whole thing was resultant of the white man's fear of reprimand for inhuman and unconstitutional treatment of others throughout the State.

The spark was the alleged pushing of the radio salesman and this, says Ballantine, ignited the powder-keg.

Conjuring up, through fear that the colored people were about to mimic the Nat Turner incident, the whites decided offense would be the best defense, Ballantine concludes.

Typical Version

It will be interesting to see however, what the FBI investigation unearths on the two following stories of what happened:

A Defense on One Hand

According to the first:

Some say the incident did not start on Feb. 25 but several days previously when a salesman struck a woman who argued with him about a radio and her 19-year-old son fought the man.

The two were arrested but released on bond. Later, officers reportedly went into the colored section to re-arrest the two and there was a little "rumbling and grumbling" among the people who thought this excessive.

Returning to town, the cops said insurrection was afoot and that's why the white "defensive assault" was launched.

Mob Violence on Other

The second charges:

The raid on colored businesses and homes followed the convergence of a mob on the Columbia jail in an effort to lynch the mother and son.

The mob was foiled by a county sheriff who said he would resist the mob with his "tommy gun."

The FBI will have to clear up such stories as this for they are many and varied among the townsfolk.

Refuse to Be Quoted

Race relations are definitely better in Columbia today, as anybody here will tell you. Nobody expects any further trouble but while people will talk glibly they won't give their names.

The pool sharks are back at their daily games, the loafers on the loafers' bench under the re-erected sidewalk roofing.

Morton's caskets have been

wiped of KKK and cleaned up, Blair's drug store is straightened up and the women say gleefully "We get waited on quick nowadays."

Outsiders Urged

Just in passing, though, it ought to be recommended that should there be such incidents in the future (God forbid), the jurists and judges be selected from cities as far removed from the scene of the occurrences as possible.

Local people, when dealing with their own misconduct, have a way of smoothing things over and even "eyeing" witnesses into saying the "right" thing.

Van Doren Letter On Riot Protested

NASHVILLE—Seven writers in the middle Tennessee area this week protested a circular letter signed by Carl Van Doren, noted author, written in support of 31 Columbia, Tenn. Negroes being held on "trumped up" charges.

Van Doren's letter was circulated by the Committee of 100, a group of national leaders organized to defend the rights of Negroes involved in the riot cases.

The protest letter was signed by Frank L. Owsley, Walter Clyde Curry, Richard C. Beatty, Donald Davidson and Dan M. Robinson, local residents; Andrew W. Lytle, Robertson County; and Thomas P. Henderson, Franklin lawyer.

The Committee for Justice in Tennessee is headed by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and includes Dr. Channing Tobias, F. H. LaGuardia, Arthur Spingard, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam and others.

Tenn. Victim's Wife Addresses D. C. Group

The Informer

Houston Texas

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Mrs. James Morton, wife of the Columbia undertaker indicted for attempted murder in the Tennessee frame-up, shared the speakers' platform with Dr. Channing Tobias at Asbury AME church, Sunday, April 7, before an overflowing crowd of more than 1,000 Citizens. The meeting was sponsored by the Washington Bureau of the NAACP.

Tenn

Eye-Witness

Mrs. Morton, an eye-witness to the so-called Columbia "riot" on February 25, described the outrageous Southern police brutality to a hushed and shocked audience, capturing the crowd's admiration and sympathy with her brave understatement.

The Columbia woman described how on the night of the tregic event she had been attending a meeting when her husband called for her explaining that trouble was brewing and that the town's white citizens were openly voicing lynching threats. Mr. Morton said that a mob was forming. and advised the people at the meeting to hurry to their various homes and be prepared to protect themselves and their falilies against mob violence. Sat. 4.20.46

About midnight of that night, a man, who described himself as a United Press representative, came into the Mortons' home on the pretext of seeking an interview. Mr Morton was accused of being the ringleader of an outlaw band and dragged off to prison with other Negroes.

It was Mrs. Morton who put through a call to the Nashville Branch of the NAACP where she was promised immediate assistance. Mrs. Morton also related how she bundled up her children and spirited them to a safer part of the city.

In introducing Dr. Tobias, Judge William H. Hastie, governor-elect of the Virgin Islands and vice president of the D. C. branch of the NAACP, told of the fight being waged by the NAACP to free the innocent per— who were arrested and charged with offenses. He revealed that the Association has organized a nation-wide committee to publicize the true facts of the Columbia affair and to raise necessary funds. Sat-4-20-46

TENNESSEE GOV. McCORD 'TOUCHY' ABOUT COLUMBIA

Daily Worker, New York, N.Y.

The **Pittsburgh Courier**, Negro newspaper, declared editorially last week that Governor Jim Nance McCord of Tennessee is "touchy" over the nationwide protest at the Columbia terror against Negro citizens.

The Governor has complained the Courier editorial stated, **"that persons outside the State are using this racial 'disturbance' for their own ends, and announces that 'we want the whole country to read the Federal reports on what happened in Columbia. We don't hide things down here'."** Thur. 5-16-46

Excerpts of the editorial follows:

"Governor McCord goes on to praise the Negroes as 'a fine lot of citizens in Columbia' and that relations between whites and Negroes are 'delightfully pleasant', followed by the charge that 'a Negro fired the first shot at Columbia.'

"'We do not need outside interference of people who do not know what they are talking about', the Governor continued, implying that all would have been well without outside agitation.

"Governor McCord may regard interracial relations in Tennessee as 'delightfully pleasant' but none of the scores of Negroes who were herded into the Columbia jail after being beaten and terrorized will agree with him.

"Without 'outside interference' the world would have been unaware of the depths to which Tennessee 'law and order' could sink and would never have known how Negro homes and business were wrecked and gutted by vicious mobs, uniformed and otherwise." Thur. 5-16-46

The enditorial concludes by urging support to the appeal of the Committee of 100 organized by the National Association or the Advancement of Colored People to raise $50,000 or the bail and legal defense of the Columbia victims.

Lily-White Jury Fails To Indict ColumbiaRioters

Chicago Defender

Chicago, Illinois

Sat 4-27-46

Judge Scored For Refusing To Name Special Grand Jury

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — A lily-white Federal Grand Jury this week closed the Columbia, Tenn., riot case by refusing to indict 31 whites of charges ranging from intent to murder to disorderly conduct.

Despite the fact that the Department of Justice sent three of its topflight lawyers here to assist in handling the case, the vandals were liberally coated witth white-wash.

Federal Judge Elmer Davies, a Tennesseean appointed to the federal bench for life by the President, recalled the grand jury which had just finished its regular session.

No Negro Jurors

He claimed that if a special grand jury had been appointed as requested by the Justice Department, it would be accused of being tipped, especially if it had returned an indictment.

There were no Negroes on the jury, although there are colored jurors certified in that section.

A Justice Department spokesman in Washington disclosed that the Department cannot control the selection of a state grand jury. The department must operate through the U. S. District Attorney in that section—Atty. Horace Frierson in the Tennessee district. Sat 4-27-46

Civil Rights Not Violated

The Grand Jury failed to find the civil rights of any of the people involved had been violated. There is a federal statute which states that these cases can be tried under cover of law and wilful intent if it can be proved that a person has deprived a citizen of rights established by the constitution. That was upheld by the Supreme Court in the Screws case and the statute was strengthened by the Supreme Court action two weeks ago when it refused to review the Primus King case.

This statute was put on the books back in the Civil War days by the Republicans to put down Ku Klux Klan activities and violation of citizens in the South, it has never been considered to be binding until the Screws and Primus cases. It is almost impossible to prove "wilful intent."

Atty. Gen. Tom Clark is pledged to see that the case gets a fair hearing. It was at his instigation that convened the session and the Attorney General pledged to prosecute any individual taking away these rights. Sat 4-27-46

Commenting on the grand jury's action, Z. Alexander Loody, chief counsel for defense, stated, "I did not expect an indictment. The men and women selected for the Grand Jury are all local people with a biased viewpoint.

"However, the fact that we did get a grand jury investigation will perhaps act as a deterrent in any similar case. The matter could be resubmitted to the grand jury, but there is no hope for any direct results from such a move."

THE UPPER SOUTH

Times New York N.Y.

Race Clash at Columbia Stirs Conflicting Reports

By VIRGINIUS DABNEY

RICHMOND, June 22—A Federal Grand Jury at Nashville has just concluded a two-and-one-half-month investigation of last February's racial clash at Columbia, Tenn., by reporting that it could find no evidence that civil rights had been violated. Almost simultaneously the Southern Regional Council, composed entirely of Southerners and having headquarters in Atlanta, published a thoughtful and temperate report which listed what it described as five separate and distinct violations. Sunday

The council's report, written by its executive director, Dr. Guy B. Johnson, formerly of the University of North Carolina faculty, listed the following "violations of civil rights": 6-23-46

(1) Needless destruction of property; (2) mistreatment of Negroes at time of arrest; (3) refusal to give lawyers immediate access to prisoners; (4) unwarranted arrests and indictments; (5) unlawful search and seizure.

The council feels that "the Columbia tragedy need not have happened." It cost the lives of two Negroes, and eleven other persons, nine of them white, were wounded. If there had been an interracial committee in the community and courageous civic leadership the clash might have been averted, the council believes. 6-23-46

NAACP Scores Point in Tenn. Cases; $11,000 Spent

Afro American

Baltimore, Md.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—As a result of NAACP protests concerning the absence of colored grand jurors, the cases involving 31 men indicted on charges of attempted murder, will not be heard until early in May. 4-20-46

Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James Stephenson, testified before the Federal Grand Jury, now holding hearings here last week.

The Stephensons are key defendants in the affair which began in a Columbia radio repair store when James protected his mother who was being slapped and punched by a radio repairman.

At the height of the tragic events, homes were vandalized and colored citizens terroized, with highway patrolmen and State guardsmen participating in an orgy of shooting and beatings of colored victims. 4-20-46

News Men Testify

Many were seriously injured and two murdered in the jail during of the 600 State guardsmen sent to Columbia.

Simultaneously with the grand jury investigation, hearings on the riots were scheduled for the Maury County Criminal Court and the Circuit Court. The county court handles minor criminal cases while the more serious cases come before the circuit court.

Whites Seek Freedom

Hearings in the cases against four whites concern motions to quash indictments on charges of attempted murder.

Six colored defendants are charged with carrying weapons, and all except one have been indicted on attempted murder charges.

They are listed as George Nicholson, James Morton, Sol Blair, Cal Lockridge, James T. Bellanfant and Meade Johnson.

ing third-degree cross-examinations. Sat 4-20-46

Several other colored persons also testified, as well as all white newsmen who covered the "riot," and Sheriff J. J. Underwood.

Walter White, NAACP secretary, announced last week that urgent appeals for funds for legal defense of the victims had to date netted $4,000.

$11,000 Spent

The association has already spent $11,000 in the case, and Mr. White again appealed for contributions to carry on the fight.

Federal grand jury sessions are closed to newsmen, and therefore no reports of actual happenings in the jury room could be obtained.

Among those standing in the corridor outside the jury room was State Highway Patrol Chief Lynn Bomar, who led the 75 highway patrolmen accused of "storm trooper" methods during the troubles.

General Summoned

A majority of the 23-man jury members are residents of middle or east Tennessee. About 20 summonses have been issued for appearances before the Federal body, including one for Brig. Gen. J. M. Dickinson, field commander

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

31 Negroes Indicted in Tenn. As 'Dry Lynching' Plot Unfolds

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Mon 4-1-46

By ROBERT MINOR

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 31.—The "dry lynching" has gotten under way here. Indictments for crimes as high as "accessory before the fact of attempted murder in the first degree" have been returned against 31 leaders of the Negro community. The list of indicted people headed by Sol Blair, the barber, and his father, Julius Blair, and by James Morton, undertaker, and the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Meade Johnson and James Thomas Ballafant. All of the indicted Negro leaders are considered responsible for preventing the bloody lynching of Jimmy Stephenson, 19-year-old Navy veteran, and his mother, ~~on the~~ public square on the night of Feb. 25.

Jimmy Stephenson, on returning from two years' service on board the U.S.S. Prometheus and at Guadalcanal, Okiwana and other places, saw his mother kicked and slapped by a white clerk on the public street of his home town, and struck the white clerk a blow that knocked him through the glass window of a shop. He is indicted (and his mother with him) for **"attempt to commit murder by use of a dangerous instrument, to-wit, pieces of glass."**

Sol and Julius Blair, James Morton, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, her son Jimmy and many others of the 31 indicted, face a prospect of 21 years in prison.

WHITE LYNCHERS NOT LISTED

Rev. Calvin Lockridge, quiet and powerfully eloquent minister who works week-days as a carpenter, saw the blaze of rifles fired at the Negroes' homes on the night of Feb. 25. He picked up his shot-gun and carried it across his arm until the firing stopped, and he is now indicted for "having a dangerous weapon with intent to be armed." The white men who fired into the Negroes' homes, and whom the police saw carrying the rifles and a rope, are not indicted.

The Grand Jury of 12 white men, the names of whom were announced on the second day after the attempted lynching, was clearly chosen to railroad to prison those who could not be lynched and those who prevented the lynching. This they are doing. The Grand Jury acts as a sub-committee of the 50 to 75 white-livered men who, armed with 35 or 40 rifles, many pistols and a rope did not carry out their plan to "go in and get those Negroes" only because twice their number of young Negroes, war veterans and others were standing guard in the Negro streets to prevent the intended double hanging.

"Dry Lynch" Victims: **Two of the 31 Negroes who face a 21-year prison sentence in the latest Columbia, Tenn., "legal lynching" indictments. Left, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, who was saved by lynchers by Negro militancy in Columbia after her son came to her rescue when a Columbia white radio repairman kicked and beat her. Solomon Blair, whose barber shop was gutted and looted by Tennessee white hoodlums.**

The indictment is in all moral respects an action of the mob. It is in accord with the desire of the men who tried to hang Jimmy Stephenson and his mother. It is therefore the continuation of the crime, not an effort to punish it.

Two men were murdered on Thursday of the week of blood. For these murders no one is indicted, because the murdered men were Negroes. Policemen who emptied tommy-guns into the bodiess of three young Negro men seated in chairs the jail house for questioning, then hauled two of them around automobile until they died,

Mon 4-1-46

are not indicted.

It was at first the admitted intention of the authorities headed by Dist.-Atty.-Gen. Paul F. Bumpus not to have any white person indicted. The two who had harangued the 50 mobsters to go ahead with the lynching were not interfered with by the police until they had failed; then they were arrested on mock charges of "profane language" and "getting drunk," and were soon released.

ARRAIGNED ON A MYTH

Four white men have now been indicted in addition to the 31 Negroes, the charge being stated as "attempted murder." It may be that these four include the two once momentarily held for "drunkenness" and "profanity." But the indictments against the white men are drawn up in such a way that they will probably not stand when tested in court. As described to me, these indictments allege that the attempted murder consisted in trying to "kick in the jail door." It seems to hinge on a myth about a supposed mass attack on the jail, told to newspaper men by Sheriff J. J. Underwood with himself as the hero who "drove away the mob." The hole in the story lies in the fact that the armed gang of white men saw Mrs. Stephenson and her son Jimmy leave the jail and drive past them down South Main St. at five o'clock in the afternoon, one or more hours before they are supposed to have attacked the jail to get them.

The four white men now indicted are dummies to make the frame-up look honest.

Only Negroes are slated for the hell-hole of prison in this case. The State and County authorities have done not one thing unfriendly to the gangsters who tried to hang a young war veteran and his mother. The only aggression was performed first by white civilian gangsters who immediately received the support of the police, and then by the police themselves, reinformed by miltiamen. The only murders and the only wrecking and looting were done by State policemen who left in the wreckage the sign "KKK," as the mark and signature of those who are trying now to send all leaders of the Negro community to prison, practically for life.

This will not be tolerated by civilization, by the Negro people, nor by their allies, the organized working class, white and Negro.

But the movement to save the leaders of the Negro community of Columbia, Tenn., must be as big and bold and fast as the one that thwarted the frame-up at Scottsboro, Ala., 15 years ago.

The dry lynching has begun.

NEGROES FACE LYNCHING

Thirty-one Negroes were indicted by the all-white Maury County Grand Judy on trumped-up charges of attempt to commit murder in the first degree. Others indicted were five for being accessories before the fact and one for being accessory after the fact in an attempt to commit first degree murder. Six are charged with carrying dangerous weapons.

Indicted on one count for attempted murder in the first degree carrying a penalty of 3 to 21 years, are: Mon 4-1-46

Tommy Baxter, James Thomas Ballanfant, Solomon Blair, Clarence Brown, Charles C. Edwards, Luther Edwards, Robert Gentry, Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Webster Matthews, John McGivens, Lewis Miles.

Also James Morton, Meade Johnson, Charles Smith, William Bills William Dawson, Horace Gordon, Milton Johnson, John Lickbridge, Willie Pigg, Raymond Lockbridge, Early Scott, Napoleon Stewart and Gene Williams.

Of these 25, four Negroes and seventy-five year old Julius Blair, were indicted on another count of being accessories before the fact to attempted murder in the first degree. They are Soloman Blair, James Morton, Meade Johnson and James Thomas Ballanfant.

Indicted also on a separate count of attempt to commit murder in the first degree are Navy veteran James Stephenson and his mother Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, who were saved from lynching by heroic action of the Negro community.

William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy were indicted for attempt to commit murder on another separate count.

Another count charged John Blackwell, a Negro nearly beaten to death by State Patrolmen, with attempt to commit murder in the first degree.

Undertaker James Morton faces another charge of being accessory after the fact to the crime of attempted murder.

Additional charges of carrying dangerous weapons, with a $50 fine, and one year jail penalty, were brought by the all-white jury against Soloman Blair, Rev. Calvin Lockridge, James Thomas Ballanfant, Meade Johnson, James Morton and George McHolsier.

Tennessee Town Quiet, Six 'Leaders' Released

P.M. New York, New York

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Mar. 4.—Six Negroes, supposedly leaders in the Columbia race riot, were released on $5000 bond from the Maury County Jail in Columbia today. Mon 3-4-46

Those released were Julius Charles, and Sol Blair, Cal Lockridge, James Martin, and James Mortion, the latter a Columbia undertaker whose establishment was raided and put under padlock by Tennessee highway patrolmen.

Those signing the bonds included R. S. Hopkins, a white attorney of Columbia.

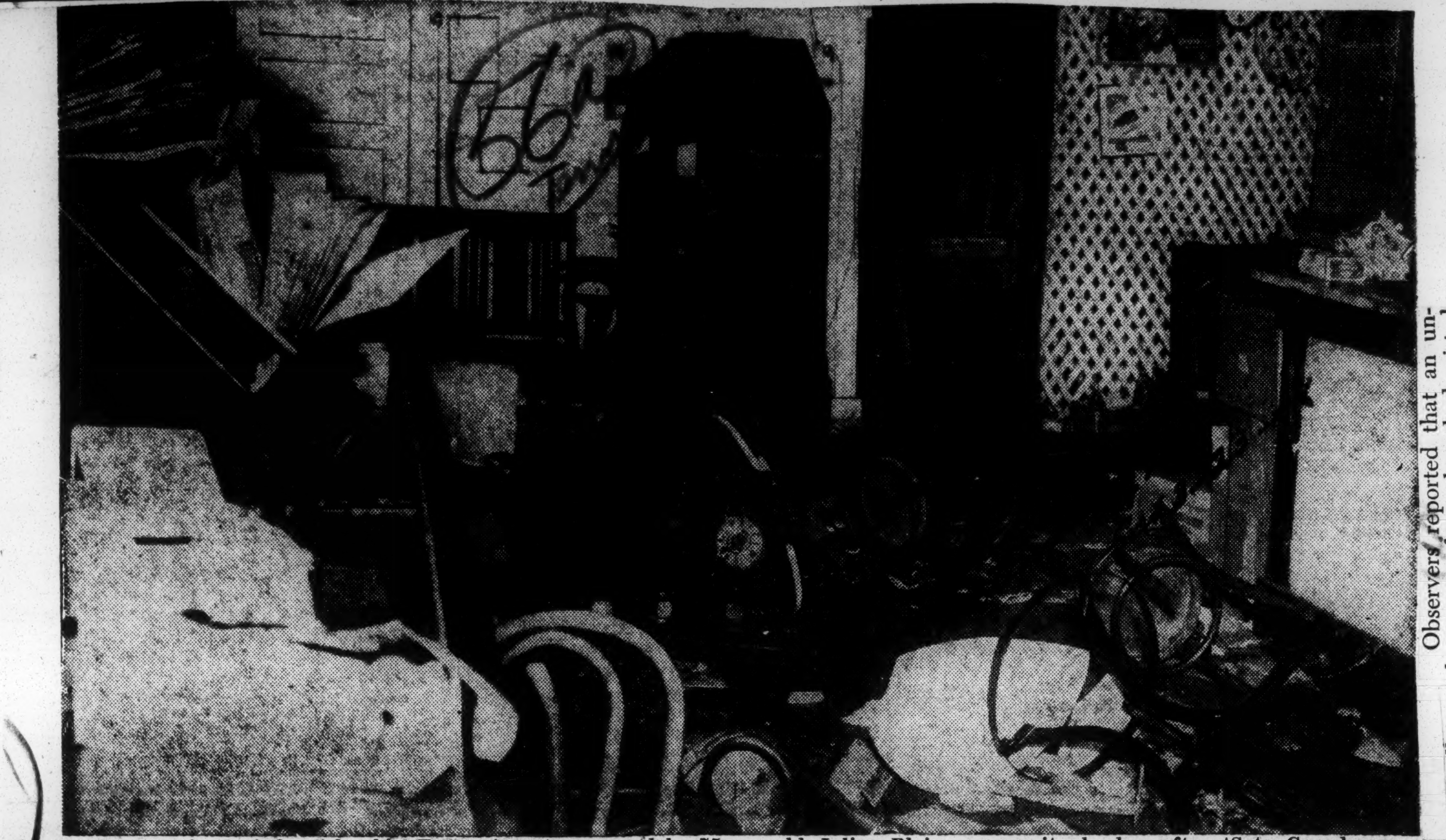
A few other suspects were released today after posting $250 bonds, but their names were withheld by Sheriff James Underwood and Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus.

Officials said the attempted jail break by William Gordon and James Johnson Thursday afternoon apparently was planned. They said others held after the rioting last Monday had disclosed that Gordon had canvassed the entire group in an attempt to borrow a pocket knife. When one was not produced, he is reported to have said: "Somebody is going down; I may be killed or hung." Gordon and Johnson died en route to a Nashville hospital after being shot at the jail by State patrolmen. MON 3-4-46

Another regiment of State guard was moved into Columbia over the week end, bringing the total of guards in this town to more than 1000.

Gov. Jim McCord said Walter White, secretary of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, was due in Nashville for a conference on the outbreak.

An intensive investigation was still being carried on to determine if outside influence figured in the rioting. Long distance telephone calls coming into Columbia in the earlier part of the week were being checked thoroughly. Officials admit that several white persons have been taken into custody in connection with the disturbance, but names were not revealed.



This is what remained of the Columbia, Tenn., drugstore owned by 75-year-old Julius Blair, community leader, after tSate Guardsmen and highway patrolmen got through "protecting" the colored business section. The store was riddled with machine gun bullets, show cases smashed, all furnishings made useless and money stolen from the cash register and juke box. Blair is being held on an attempted murder charge, although he was in another part of the town when the disturbance broke out.

Tenn. Negroes Bail Out 12 Heroes

Daily Worker New york, N.Y.

By **HARRY RAYMOND**

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 8.—I stood in the rain outside the Red Brock County Jail here at midnight as the last 13 of 101 Negroes arrested during the successful fighting off of a lynching last week, walked out on bond. Emerging first from the side door was tall James T. Bellofont. he still had on part of the U. S. Army uniform he wore with honor fighting the Nazis on many fronts in Europe.

This handsome, bronze-faced war veteran still in his twenties, was being released on $5,000 cash bail, charged with attempt to commit murder. He never had laid a violent hand on anybody in this community. He was arrested and held incommunicado a week after police illegally searched his home and took from it a machine gun he brought back from Europe as a war trophy. Sat 3-9-46

Tenn

It was not against the Tennessee law for the ex-soldier to own this gun. It was well known in the community he possessed it.. In fact, Sheriff J. J. Underwood had seen it and admired it along with a second trophy, a German pistol, when the young Negro brought them back from the war. Bellofont then gave the pistol to the Sheriff as a present.

HALF WERE VETS

Filing out of the jail behind Bellofont were 12 other young Negroes, at least six of them war veterans. Eight face the same charge as Bellofont—attempt to murder—and four, out on $250 bail each, are charged with possessing weapons.

Here was the beginning of a mass frameup aimed at the body of the finest citizens in this community. Released earlier on bail and facing similar charges before an all-white grand jury are James Morton and James Martin, business men and the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist pastor.

Another defendant is Louis Miles Jr., 25, a veteran with three years and six months war service in the Signal Corps. He spent 22 months in military operations in France, Luxembourg and Germany.

WASN'T EVEN THERE

Miles was visiting friends outside Columbia when a mob of armed white men, the local police, then state patrolmen sought to lynch Jimmy Stephenson, Negro Navy veteran, because he struck a white man in defense of his mother.

He was not present when a couple of blasts of bird shot scattered policemen who came down to the colored district to get young Stephenson. Yet Miles was held for eight days before he was released on $5,000 bond on an attempt to murder charge.

While in jail this veteran was slugged. He saw uniformed policemen or state guardsmen knock other Negroes down in the prison. One, he said, was knocked unconscious by a blackjack because he had his hat on. It was during this time two Negro prisoners were shot to death in the county jail.

A NEW KIND OF MAN

Bail for release of tne thirteen—$46,000 cash—was put up in the Sheriff's office by local Negroes. Maurice Weaver, militant NAACP attorney and Navy veteran offered full financial sources of the NAACP for bail. But these wonderful local Negro people here, insisting on being in the forefront of the fight for justice, went down to the community and brought in their own cash bond.

"These are the new Negroes of the South," said Z. Alexander Looby, fighting Negro attorney on the case from Nashville. "The Booker T. Washington Negroes are becoming a thing of the past. The modern Negro has fought for democracy abroad and he is determined to get it at home. The new Negro is the DuBois Negro, the Langston Hughes Negro." Sat 3-9-46

Attorney Looby, the man who walks rather than ride a Jimcrow bus, the man who valiantly stands up and fights for his people, is himself the highest example of his new Negro.

Southerners Insist U. S. Act on Columbia

NASHVILLE, Tenn., March 8. — The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, in a telegram to Attorney General Tom Clark, scored the report by federal district attorney Horace Frierson that **"no federal civil right statutes** were violated" in Columbia, Tenn.

"Prior to such statement," the telegram said, "homes in the Negro section were invaded, the business area physically destroyed and about United Packinghouse Workers.

All Quiet in Riot Town

P.M. New York N.Y.

Special Correspondence

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 28.—Citizens were about their normal business today with few surface reminders that this town was the scene of a bitter riot Monday night when 10 persons were wounded by gunfire in the Negro section known as "Mink Slide."

About 500 members of the State Guard remained on patrol duty and authorities were uncertain when they would be withdrawn. At nearby Mount Pleasant, all beer parlors were shut following a fight between two white men and a Negro. Seventy-seven persons remained under arrest here, all but two of them Negroes. Twelve of the Negroes are charged with attempted murder. Thur. 2.28.4

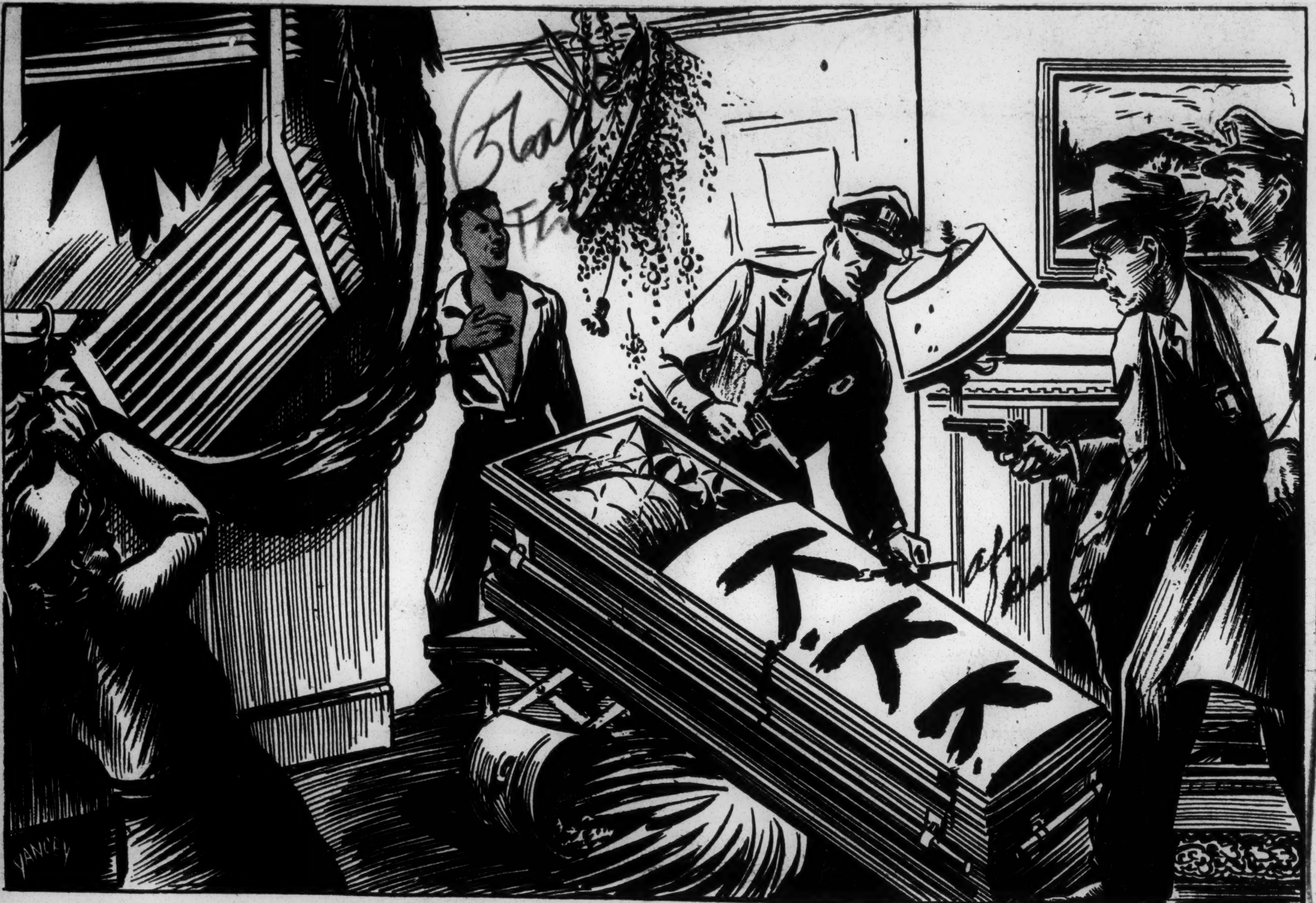
At the request of the Justice Dept., District Attorney Harris Frierson was investigating to see if Federal rights of any citizens were violated during the disorder. Mayor Eldridge Denham issued a confident statement that "Columbia's white and Negro citizens will soon resume their harmonious relationship without any further misunderstanding."

Rumor mongers were busy whispering that Negro toughs were on their way from Chicago and other places to revive the fighting. State police, checking all automobiles entering the city, called the rumor unadulterated bunk.

Observers reported that an undercurrent of race hate had existed in this area since July, 1943, when the film *Cabin in the Sky* was shown at Mt. Pleasant. Negroes turned out in large numbers because of the all-Negro cast and a number of fights broke out in the theater between Negroes and whites.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)



When uniformed Tennessee State Highway Patrolmen rampaged through the business section of Columbia, they completely wrecked and looted the funeral home of James Morton, as depicted in this drawing by Staff Artist Francis Yancey. After shooting up the place, smashing the furnishings the law enforcement officers entered the casket display room and carefully marked a two-foot high KKK on the most expensive casket. Every business establishment in the district was similarly wrecked and looted.

FROM MULES TO MAYHEM

Eyewitness Describes Riot Town

Chicago Defender

By RICHARD DURHAM

Columbia's blood-bath was its post-war plan.

It began Tuesday when the Tennessee town turned its 3,000 Negroes into prisoners.

Mop-up was in Mink Slide, tommy-gunned, looted, raided and sealed by state policemen for "safe keeping."

On Wednesday, Carl Hirsch, Chicago correspondent for the Daily Worker, was the first Northern white reporter to roam for two days through the tense town.

"It was like being in a Nazi concentration camp," said Hirsch who returned to Chicago this week. "They sealed off the Negroes in the hollow. Every window and shop was wrecked and robbed. No one could enter the community without permission. Every other white man was armed."

"The Law Done It"

Hirsch said one Negro surveying the riot explained: "The law done it. It was the law that done it."

Columbia, he said, is the mule market of the South, but had turned from mules to mayhem.

"It was Scottsboro on a mass scale," Hirsch said. "On Wednesday they were still bringing in Negroes by groups and singly. The grand jury was waiting to grind out indictments. An all-white jury will try them."

Hirsch, who covered the Sikeston, Mo., peonage demonstration in 1939, had returned to his rooming house and to a landlady who slept with a gun by her bed when two Negro prisoners, William Gordon and James Johnson, were shot in Maury County jail. Sat.

Refused Treatment

"I heard sirens and saw an army reconnaissance car speeding down the street to beat hell. I went over to the office of the Herald, the local paper, and found the editor on the phone trying to find if either of the Negroes had a police record.

"When I called the white hospital, the girl told me somebody had been brought in but she didn't say who. I later learned it was two Negroes who had been shot."

Gordon and Johnson were refused treatment at the Columbia Hospital. When they arrived at a Nashville Hospital 43 miles away they were dead.

Hirsch, a 32-year-old Chicagoan, who spent three years in South Carolina while in the army, said one of the main motives for the riot was resentment at gains Negroes had made during the war.

Blames "Outsiders" 3-9-45

"One white lawyer named Love, like most of the anti-Negro elements in the town, blamed the trouble on 'outside agitators.' He lamented 'we've always treated our niggers nice and now they turn against us like this.'"

Hirsch said he found the New York daily, PM's correspondent a "local man who felt that Negroes had gotten a lot of big ideas" during the war and had to be pushed back to what he called "normal."

He found an able white attorney representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who "came down thinking he could make a deal and settle the trouble 'off the record.' Next day I talked to him he realized the town was out to do a job on the Negroes."

Store Looted Sat.

The Daily Worker reporter found himself barred, together with all white civilians, when he attempted to enter Mink Slide, the Negro section. He later met Julius Blair, 75-year-old owner of a Negro drug store, in the town's court square.

"Blair said that looters had emptied his store and cleaned out his stock and cash register. Later that evening they picked Blair up again and jailed him," Hirsch said.

The term "Mink Slide," Hirsch said, was a name given the Negro community during the days of prohibition when a whiskey still burst atop the ridge overlooking the Negro community. The "Mink" was never explained, said Hirsch, but as the spirits slid down into the hollow the section was so named.

Watched By Deputies

Watched closely by deputies and patrolmen as he covered the town, Hirsch said he found many of the town's white workers, particularly among members of the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers, strongly opposed to the riot but could do nothing "without outside help."

The reporter laid responsibility for the riot directly upon agitation of the "Bilbos and Rankins," upon the laxity of Tennessee's Senator McKellar and upon President Truman "who has not raised his voice against the outbreak."

"There's no telling actually how many people were killed," said Hirsch who reported that one young patrolman gleefully described the shooting of a Negro storekeper. "If they had not taken young Stevenson away there would have been a lynching." Sat

"One thing that stopped the mob was the heroic defense put up by the Negroes. Of course they didn't have a chance against the tommy-gunners who tore up the place. But if the mob had not seen that the Negroes would put up a stiff fight there would have been a mass lynching." Sat.

Columbia Leaders Believe Riot Result Of Abuse Of Veterans

Civilian Said To Have Beaten Mother Of Veteran

Memphis World

Tennessee

Fri 3-1-46

By NAT D. WILLIAMS

COLUMBIA, Tenn.— Smoldering resentmentB plus nervous trigger fingers resulted in a 16-hour race riot and continuing tenseness in this hilly little middle Tennessee county-seat town this week.

Seventy of the town's Negro citizens, particulary business leaders, are held in the Maury county jail awaiting grand jury action on charges ranging from drunkenness and disorderly conduct to assault to commit murder. Tennessee highway patrolmen were still bringing in Negro leaders under arrest as late as 2 p. m. Wednesday.

The entire Negro business district, a block on East Eighth St., after having been largerly wrecked by gunfire, was closed to traffic and under constant patrol by members of the Tennessee state guard units of which came from Nashville and other nearby cities.

Relatives of the jailed Negro citizens are not permitted to pass beyond the line of the guardsmen patrolling the entrance to the jail. Efforts to make bond for the internees proved fruitless up until Wednesday.

The trouble started at noon Monday when Mrs. Gladys Stevenson 37, and her son James C. Stevenson Jr., 19, a veteran of three years overseas duty with the U. S. Navy went to the Castner-Knott electric shop on the main Street of Columbia to pick up a radio which Mrs. Stevenson had sent there for repairs. Mrs. Stevenson said she had sent the radio to the shop more than a month ago. She wanted a new set of tubes, but the radio repair men (white) wanted to make other repairs. Mrs. Stevenson, who works as a domestic servant told her employer, Mrs. Evelyn Syles, about the situation, and was advised to go get her radio. Her employer called the manager of the concern and he told her the radio had been sold. However, he promised to restore the instrument if Mrs. Stevenson would pay the sum of $13.75.

Fri 3-1-46

Mrs. Stevenson and her son went to pay this amount and get the radio. She talked with the two white repairmen. They tried to persuade her to allow them to repair the radio as they wished She refused and remarked that her radio had been ruined and that she would try to get it repaired some other place. As she and her son started to leave the second floor of the establishment they met a white man who was also registering a complaint about the manner in which the men repaired radios. Instead of heeding this man, the two repair men followed the Negro couple to the first floor and the front of the shop. When they reached the street the two men, one of whom was William Fleming, 28, a reputed Negro-baiter Mrs. Stevenson said, struck her son. The Navy veteran returned the blow, knocking Fleming through the plateglass. Meanwhile the other man glass window of the shop. Fleming was cut by falling glass.

Meanwhile the other man continued to attack young Stevenson. His mother was pleading with the white men to leave her son alone.

A blonde white man, Mrs. Stevenson said, across the street from the front of the county court house had jumped on her. He knocked her down and began stamping on her with his feet. (Mrs. Stevenson was in bed Wednesday recovering from bruises about the head and face.)

She succeeded in getting away from her assailant and ran to the nearby Stevenson (white) drugstore, where she asked a relative of her employer to stop the white men from 'killing her son' when she and the rescurer went back on the street they found that Columbia city police had arrived. The police placed Mrs. Stevenson and her son under arrest. Mrs. Stevenson said one of the officers beat her repeatedly about the head and body and spoke to her abusively: The mother and her son were held in jail from noon until 5:30 p. m. Monday, when they were released on bail of $3500. The money was raised through Mrs. Stevenson's mother, Mrs. Hannah Pepper, long-time Columbia resident, who was assisted in raising the fund by local business men.

When news that the Negro couple had been bailed out spread over the town rumors spread that a white mob was planning to hunt young Stevenson and his mother down and lynch them. The white men in the affair had not been arrested. Fri 3-1-46

59

Negro Columbians heard about the alleged mob. Word soon reached Sheriff J. J. Underwood of Maury county, that armed groups of Negroes had assembled in the East Eighth Street Business district Negro Columbians apparently remembered previous local lynch attempts, the latest of which was last year.

Sheriff Underwood, in giving "I went to the street and saw 40 his account of the affair said to 50 Negroes standing around with shotguns and rifles in their hands. Since there is no law about carrying such weapons during the hunting season, I merely told them to disperse and go home. Several of them started to get impudent with me, but others in the group told them to "shut up" I ordered them to disband and go home. Then I went to the public square, where I saw a group of around 40 or 50 white men, who had no guns visible. I talked to them and told them to disperse and go home. "Some of the Negroes and some of the white had been drinking. I immediately arrested three of the white men who had been drinking. I later arrested two Negroes who were driving a car in the city and had high-powered rifles with them. Then I heard shooting on Eighth Street. This was around 8:30 p. m. I learned that four officers had been shot."

The wounded officers were Will Wilsford 60, shot crically by buckshot in the head, mouth and chest, Bernard Stofel, Sam Richardson and Chief J. W. Griffin.

The shooting on Eighth Street led the Sheriff to request aid of the Tennessee highway patrolmen and later a call to Governor James McCord to send in state guard units. The additional helpers arrived to find Negroes barricaded in their places on Eighth Sheriff Underwod, who is politically popular with Negroes, said he and the patrolmen went Tuesday morning to the Negro business district knocked on doors and requested the occupants of buildings to come out. He said they were answered by shots. This led to the shooting up of the Negro business district.

A curfew was announced. Groups of three or more people were prohibited. A search of the homes of all the 3,000 Negro residents of Columbia was started. Some 400 varied types of fire arms and other weapons were collected. Negroes suspected of participation in the disturbance were placed under arrest. Among those arrested were: A. J. Morton, prominent undertaker, Julius Blair Jr. and Julius Blair Sr., Morton was one of the 12 Negroes arrested when patrolmen entered his home, adjoining the mortuary shortly before daybreak Tuesday.

Fri 3-1-46

The men were reported as having offered no resistance but that patrolmen were fired upon from a dance hall, the Twilight Inn across the street. The fire was answered by blasts from tommy guns wielded by patrolmen. The twelve men were charged with assault with intent to commitee murder. 4 shotguns, two small caliber rifles and pistol were found in their possession, along with several bottles of whiskey, it was reported.

Columbia's Mayor Eldredge Denham, restaurant operator, when interviewed, said, "I have always been a friend to Negroes." He issued a proclamation calling on all citizens to maintain peace.

56

Rev. Z. A. Brown pastor of St. Paul Church in Columbia, stated that the riot was regrettable, and joined Mr. Joseph Branden, veteran taxi-driver and Mrs. Rebecca Johnson, former Columbia schoolteacher and civic leader, in the sentiment of many young returned the disturbance was the deep reopinion that the basic cause of Ngro service men to the attempts of certain elements of white Columbians to treat Negroes with contempt and abuse.

Fri 3-1-46

Mrs. Stevenson and her son expect to be called for trial sometime in March. Meanwhile the 12,000 Negro and white citizens of Columbia continue to live under an atmosphere of deep tension accentuated by the presence and activities of uniformed state guards, state highway patrolmen

Loitering groups of white civilians, and grim faced Negroes are going about routine affairs. The public schools, closed Tuesday were re-opened Wednesday, along with all the other local business closed down in this agricultural county-seat during the 16 hours of racial violence.

New Organization Aids Tenn. Victims

Afro-American

NASHVILLE—The formation of a Tennessee Committee for Justice in Columbia was disclosed here last week when several persons received telegrams inviting them to become members.

The telegrams, which bore the signatures of Fyke Farmer, the Rev. James S. Ferguson. Dr. Charles S. Johnson, Dr. Alva W. Taylor and the Rev. J. Philip Wyatt, were dispatched from 212½ Union St. Baltimore, Md.

This is the same address listed on the mail from J. A. Dumbrowski, executive secretary of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

4-27-46

Organization of the committee, ostensibly to raise funds for the defense of Columbia defendants, came as a surprise to local residents, signce the NAACP has been conducting such a highly successful fund-raising drive.

Court Frames 12 Negroes

Daily Worker New York N.Y.

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 6.—Nine Negro citizens were charged today with "attempt to commit murder" and three were held for "carrying concealed weapons" in connection with the violent events of last week. Thurs 3-7-46

56a

The charges against the Negroes are part of local official steps to whitewash an attempted lynching of James Stephenson, colored war vet, and his mother by a Columbia mob and state highway patrolmen.

Two Negroes were shot to death by state patrolmen in the county jail after the colored community stood off the lynchers with hunting weapons.

The Negroes charged with crime had been held in jail incommunicado for a week Attorney General Paul Bumpus revealed the names of the persons held and the charges against them shortly before a hearing on a habeas corpus writ to produce the defendants was scheduled to be held before Circuit Court Justice Joe M. Ingram.

Maurice Weaver, attorney for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville Negro attorney, were in court ready to argue on the writ when Bumpus handed them a list of defendants and announced that bail had been fixed.

Weaver and Looby, armed with briefs in support of habeas corpus and in fighting spirit, came here this morning for a showdown. They got it.

Bumpus, apparently agitated, indicated he wanted to avoid an argument in open court. He politely handed a list of the jailed men to the two lawyers. He picked up his brief case and promptly left the courthouse down the steps under an archway where a Negro was lynched 10 years ago. The NAACP attorneys agreed not to press the fight for the writ.

Weaver and Looby left immediately and went down into the Mink Slide Negro business district, which is in a state of total wreck, checking the hundreds of thousands of dollars of property damage inflicted by highway patrolmen and state guards. Thurs 3-7-46

They are planning legal action to recover damages. Negroes are not allowed to enter the wrecked area without police passes.

Two attorneys also went to work posting bond for the 13 colored men in jail.

VICTIMS HELD

Those held in $5,000 bond on the attempt to commit murder charge are James Thomas, Bellofont, Jessie Partel, Tommy Lee Baxter, Clarence W. Brown, Webster Matthews, Charles Clifford Edwards, Charlie

Smith, Lloyd Kennedy and Luther Edwards.

Held in $250 bond on the weapons charge are Henry Thomas Edwards, Huston Edwards, Hiawatha Leftrick and Robert Edwards.

There is no legal basis for the charges, spokesmen for the defendants said. They characterized it as a gigantic frameup. And the weapons charge is quite ridiculous for the guns were all seized without search warrants in homes There is no law in Tennessee forbidding arms being kept in a private home.

Calif. Group Gives to Tenn. Riot Fund

Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

SAN FRANCISCO—Citizens attending a protest meeting at Providence Baptist Church last week donated money to the defense fund for the Columbia riot victims and sent a wire to President Truman.

56a

The message to the President read in part:

"Citizens of San Francisco vigorously protest the outrage in Columbia, Tenn. and demand that you personally take all possible steps to apprehend and punish murderers, vandals and terrorists.

Disgrace Before UNO

The telegram read further, "United States disgraced before world on this issue at time UNO is meeting in our country. United States can make no contribution world peace while it fails to practice democracy within own borders." 4-30-46

Among those addressing the audience were Joseph James, president of the San Francisco Branch NAACP; Harold Sawyer, attorney, and the Rev. F. B. Banks, pastor of Providence Baptist Church.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Victims of Police Terror in Columbia, Tenn.

Civilian

56a

Here are five of the defendants and their counsel in the Columbia, Tenn. "Rioting" case. Seated left to right, Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney; Julius Blair, 76-year-old businessman; Z. A. Looby, Nashville attorney, and NAACP Secretary Walter White. Standing left to right, James Martin, grocer; James E. Morton, undertaker; Charles E. Blair, merchant; Saul W. Blair, barbershop owner, and M. G. Ferguson, banker and president of the Nashville NAACP. All five of them, community leaders, are charged with attempted murder." (J. R. Anderson Photo)

Sat. 3-16-46

Trouble In Maury Caused By Threat To Stage Lynching

Nashville Globe

Nashville, Tennessee

Fri 3-1-46

COLUMBIA, TENN.—With only ten persons injured, despite the greatest amount of gunfire ever heard in this little town, Tennessee and the nation are undoubtedly in a better light before the world than they would have been had not a group of colored men of Columbia jeopardized their lives and the lives of their families and property to prevent another lynching in Maury County. Whatever is to be the outcome of the trials of a number of colored leaders, who were languishing in jail here Wednesday, the verdict of all unbiased persons who will have gotten the real facts that brought on the trouble which has been miscalled a "race riot," will be that the jailed colored leaders acted in self-defense, and had they been white men they would have been called alert and useful citizens instead of being smeared as criminals.

Fri 3-1-46

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There were about 70 colored men in jail Wednesday. Among them were such well known Columbians as James Morton, undertaker; Solomon Blair and his father, Julius Blair owners of a drug store and other business places on Eighth Street and Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist pastor. The understanding is that these leaders are to be charged with "attempted murder" and if convicted, will be sent to prison. Their indictment, if any, will be made by an all-white grand jury, because, despite what the Supreme Court of the United States has said, they have only all-white grand juries in Maury County. If they are brought to trial they will face an all-white petit jury and a full array of court officials, all of whom will be white.

Civilian

The daily press associations and newspapers of this area have already given the white folks' side of the Columbia trouble. They have suppressed all of the facts that would lead an unbiased person to appreciate the harrassment of Columbia's colored people, both before and at the time of the flare-up on Monday and Monday night of this week.

Prior to Monday's trouble, colored Columbians were aware of two lynchings in or near Columbia in recent years, and for which not a single member of the mobs was brought to justice. The first of these two lynchings was in the heart of the city. It is said that for a year or so thereafter, one of the sights of Columbia was the courthouse from which the colored man was lynched, showing the rope with which he was hanged, dangling from a window.

Fri 3-1-46

The other lynching was that of a boy named Cordie Cheek, charged with molesting a white girl but who after being spirited to Nashville for safe keeping, was set free by grand jury action. Cordie, after being released from the Nashville jail, went to the home of a relative near Fisk University, and very shortly thereafter, members of a mob came to the home brandishing shotguns, took the boy away in a car and lynched him near Columbia. It is reported that there were some 500 persons in the mob. Nobody was ever convicted or tried for that brutal lynching.

It was with these thoughts in mind that colored Columbians prepared to prevent the lynching of a mother and her son here this past week. The mother, was Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, 37 and her son, James Stephenson, 19. On Monday the mother and son were in the Castner Knott store on Columbia's Public Square. There the mother had words with a white radio repairman of the firm about her radoi, in which she disputed his claim that the radio had been repaired. A fight ensued, resulting in the mother being beaten and knocked down. The boy and mother fought back, which resulted in the young white man getting knocked through a glass window, and injured by the broken glass. Shortly thereafter policemen came and arrested the mother and her son but did not arrest the white man, so the mother states. Mother and son were put in jail. Colored business leaders, fearing the mother and son would be taken out and lynched, got both out of jail on bond, amounting to more than $3.000.

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The fighting incident, and the fact that the mother and son had been released from jail, appear to have aroused a number of whites. Rev. Calvin Lockridge, colored Baptist pastor, testifies that he heard that a man had gone into a store to purchase a rope and had said they intended to lynch the Negroes in "Mink Slide," the colored business section of Columbia. When this threat got to the colored people of the section they went to their homes, got their guns and decided to defend themselves as best they could against mob violence. As a first precaution they put out all of the lights in their section of the town.

Fri 3-1-46

With their section blacked out and all of them excited over the expected visit of the mob, the nervousness of the colored citizens was intensified when some white men came through the section and fired guns, presumably to frighten the people of the community. Colored citizens say that these were the first shots fired—the shots by the white motorists. Later, four white policemen drove their car into the section and they were fired upon, presumably by some of the colored citizens. The report of colored persons is that it was not possible to tell the police from any other white persons.

It was after the officers had been shot that city and county officials called for help. One hundred highway patrolmen and about 500 members of the State Guard were rushed to Columbia promptly by Gov. Jim Nance McCord. These completely surrounded the colored business section but did not move in until after daybreak, Tuesday morning. When they did go in they used their tommy guns with devastating effect, but succeeded only in wrecking about all of the business places in the area. No serious casualties resulted. Much property was damaged, and according to a relative of Julius Blair, drugstore owner, his soda fountain was wrecked and, when the smoke of the conflict had lifted, he was minus most of the money he had in the drugstore.

After the highway patrolmen and militia had taken over the area, the sheriff appointed about 125 of them as his deputies and they were sent on a house-to-house search for firearms. It appears that very little consideration was given to that clause in the Constitution of the United States which protects a citizen from unreasonable search and seizure. There was no report of white homes being searched and their arms taken from them. Even white citizens who were seen roaming the streets with sawed off shotguns, reportedly were merely asked by authorities to go home and put them away.

On their visit to the home of Undertaker Morton, about twelve citizens were found. They were said to have had guns and officers claim to have found some liquor. Undertaker Morton appears to have been selected as a ringleader when the "unreasonable search and seizure", of his home was made. He was put in jail and kept all through Tuesday night. Nashville friends of the undertaker and other leaders made bond of $2,000 each for the jailed men. However, Columbia citizens had not released the men Wednesday afternoon.

When news of the Columbia trouble spread throughout the nation it was made much of in metropolitan dailies, all of them taking the angle that Negroes had staged a riot. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People took prompt action in petitioning Gov. McCord for a fair administration of the law. U. S. Attorney General Clark was importuned to have District Attorney Horace Frierson make an investigation.

Fri 3-1-46

After all of the danger to lives and damage to property had taken place the mayor and highway patrol chief took commendable action to allay the trouble. They went about the city, and especially the colored section, with loud speakers assuring the people that all was well and that the military men were in town to protect all citizens, regardless of race. It is believed that had this sort of broadcasting been done at the very beginning of threatened hostilities there never would have been any shooting. Colored citizens breathed happily when it was made plain to them that they, too, would be protected by the large contingent of uniformed men sent to Columbia. They did not have such assurance when they observed that only colored homes were invaded in search of firearms, and when, out of 70 persons arrested, 68 were Negroes and only two were white.

Attorney's of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of both the Chattanooga and Nashville branches are understood to have been instructed to make a full investigation of the Columbia outbreak and to seek by every legal means to protect the colored citizens in their civil rights.

One phase of the affair, out of which unfair newspapers made much ado, was that colored newspapers ministers and kin of Columbians sought to make telephone calls to the city and were thwarted in their effort. An investigation is to be made to find out if anybody in Columbia actually had the right to refuse to complete a regular long distance telephone call to Columbia customers of the Telephone System. In their eagerness to get messages through to colored persons in the city it was necessary to send telegrams, one attempted user of his telephone is saying.

Colored leaders in Columbia believe that had they not gotten Mrs. Stephenson and her son James out of jail promptly and also taken the precaution to arm and then black out the section in which they lived those who boastfully stated that they were going to carry out a lynching might have done so. They did not believe that local authorities would prevent a lynching in 1946 any more than their predecessors did in other cases with which colored Columbians have been taunted for the past fifteen years or more.

Fear Whitewash In Columbia Riot

Chicago Defender, Ill.

NAACP Frees 13 Defendants On Habeas Corpus Writ

5 Tenn

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Officials here this week continued to build an elaborate whitewash of the recent police terror was imposed on Negro citizens after they had opposed the lynching of a Negro naval vet and his mother.

A consistent effort is being made to keep the spotlight on the Negro "defendants" arrested after the disturbances rather than on the practically destroyed and looted Mink Slide Negro business district and the killing by police of two Negroes in an alleged "jailbreak." Authorities are also trying to keep in the background the fact that only two white arrests have been made in the case.

Columbia

William H. Hastie, chairman of the legal committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Martin Pepper, of the National Lawyers' Guild, conferred with Atty. Gen. Tom Clark in Washington last week, to insist on a more vigorous investigation by the Department of Justice. Since U. S. Attorney Horace Frierson, located in Nashville, is a native of Columbia, the NAACP requested an investigator direct from Washington. However, the department sent James Ruffin, an assistant attorney general and a native of Tennessee, who promptly announced he would work under Frierson's directions. 3-16-46

Boast of Phone-Tapping

Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, revealed that Bayard Tarpley, secretary to Governor McCord, and Governor McCord himself, boasted of tapping the telephone wires on all calls to and from the Negro district of Columbia.

Sat.

While categorically denied the report carried in some newspapers and over some radio stations that he had approved of the manner in which the state and local authorities had handled the riot.

Further efforts to hold 13 Negro prisoners incommunicado proved unsuccessful when Maurice Weaver, white NAACP attorney and Z. Alexander Looby, Negro attorney from Nashville, proceeded to file habeas corpus writs on behalf of the imprisoned men.

Just before a hearing on the habeas corpus writs was to be held before Circuit Court Justice Joe M. Ingram, District Atty. Paul Bumpus, seeing the uselessness of attempting further secrecy, handed over a list of the "defendants."

Nine Attempted Murder Charges

Those held in $5,000 bond on attempt to commit murder charges are James Thomas, Jessie Partel, Tommy Lee Baxter, Clarence W. Brown, Webster Matthews, Charles Clifford Edwards, Charlie Smith, Lloyd Kennedy and Luther Edwards.

Held in $250 bond on "concealed weapons" charges are Henry Thomas Edwards, Huston Edwards, Hiawatha Leftrick and Robert Edwards.

There is no legal basis for the charges, spokesmen for the "defendants" said. They characterized it as a gigantic frameup. And the weapons charge is quite ridiculous, for the guns were all seized without search warrants in homes. There is no law in Tennessee forbidding arms being kept in a private home.

3-16-46

5 Tenn

Clark Promises Probe

In Washington Attorney General Tom Clark has promised if any federal violations are uncovered, prosecution will follow.

In New York City, Walter White stated that every pressure would be brought to bear to secure the arrest and conviction of the real culprits, the mob members who stoned the jail February 26, and the state highway patrolmen and militiamen who violated the constitutional rights of citizens. He said that there was indication that patrolmen and militia members had stolen property. This assertion was based on the fact that at the time when all civilians were barred from the Negro area, the business establishment of Julius Blair, which had no persons in it, had the clock shot from the wall, the juke box wrecked, cloth cut from the billiard tables, all cigarettes and cigars missing, as well as all ice cream. Sat.

Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for the NAACP, will go to Tennessee to arrange for the defense after he has finished with a Supreme Court case here, it was disclosed.

Halt Lynch Terror Against Negro People!

Daily Worker New York

Rally at Union Sq. Thursday--Foster

Mon. 3-4-46

5a

William Z. Foster, national chairman of the Communist Party, called yesterday for a mass turnout for the Union Square demonstration this Thursday as the beginning of a movement to halt lynch terror against the Negro people.

FOSTER

"The reign of lynch terror under way in Tennessee against a whole community of Negroes should arouse the profound indignation and protest of every laboring man and woman and every decent American," Foster declared.

"The Tennessee terror bears the hoof and stamp of Hitlerism and is reminiscent of the worst days of the Ku Klux Klan.

"It is clear that the rising tide of violence against the Negro and other oppressed minorities springs from a well calculated plan of Big Business reaction to destroy the living standards and democratic rights of all the people.

"The poison of the Rankins and Bilbos is doing its mischief. It is seeping not only through the South but into the northern communities. Freeport, Long Island, with its murder of the two Negro GIs is its handiwork.

Mon. 3-4-46

"We must arouse all labor to act with vigor against this drive of reaction.

"It is therefore the duty of every party member to make Union Square ring out March 7 with the cry, HALT THE LYNCH TERROR AGAINST THE NEGRO PEOPLE!"

Heroism of Columbia Negroes In Pogrom Told by One of Them

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

5a

WASHINGTON, April 8.—A determined, sober crowd of several hundred Washingtonians met last week at the John Wesley Church to act for the 31 Negro frame-up victims of Columbia, Tennessee. The meeting was sponsored by the National Negro Congress and 13 labor, civic and other organizations.

Rev. Calvin Lockridge, one of the heroes of the Negro community that stood up to the fascist terror of the State of Tennessee, was given a thunderous standing ovation as he rose to recount the story of the Columbia pogrom.

Tenn

LIBERTY OR DEATH

With the memory of three past lynchings he had witnessed, Rev. Lockridge stated, he knew what to expect when a rope was brought to the square and the Negro citizens were told by the sheriff to go on home, while a white mob assembled to shoot up the Negro community. Rev. Lockwood was surrounded by machine guns and thrown in jail.

Columbia

Dozens, scores of citizens—all Negro—were dragged from their beds, beaten, their teeth knocked out, their jaws smashed, and flung into the crowded prison, where they were held incommunicado for four days. At that time, two of the prisoners were riddled with bullets, and driven out of town to die.

Rev. Lockwood appealed to the people of the nation to rally behind the 31 defendants, because a fair trial is impossible in Tennessee. His speech ended with the words "Give us liberty or give us death!"

Samuel Neuberger, one of the first awyers to investigate the Columbia erro opened his talk by lashing ut against the vicious Jimcrow ystem of the nation's capital. "I m ashamed," he said, "that only a house of prayer can we meet protest against murder in our untry."

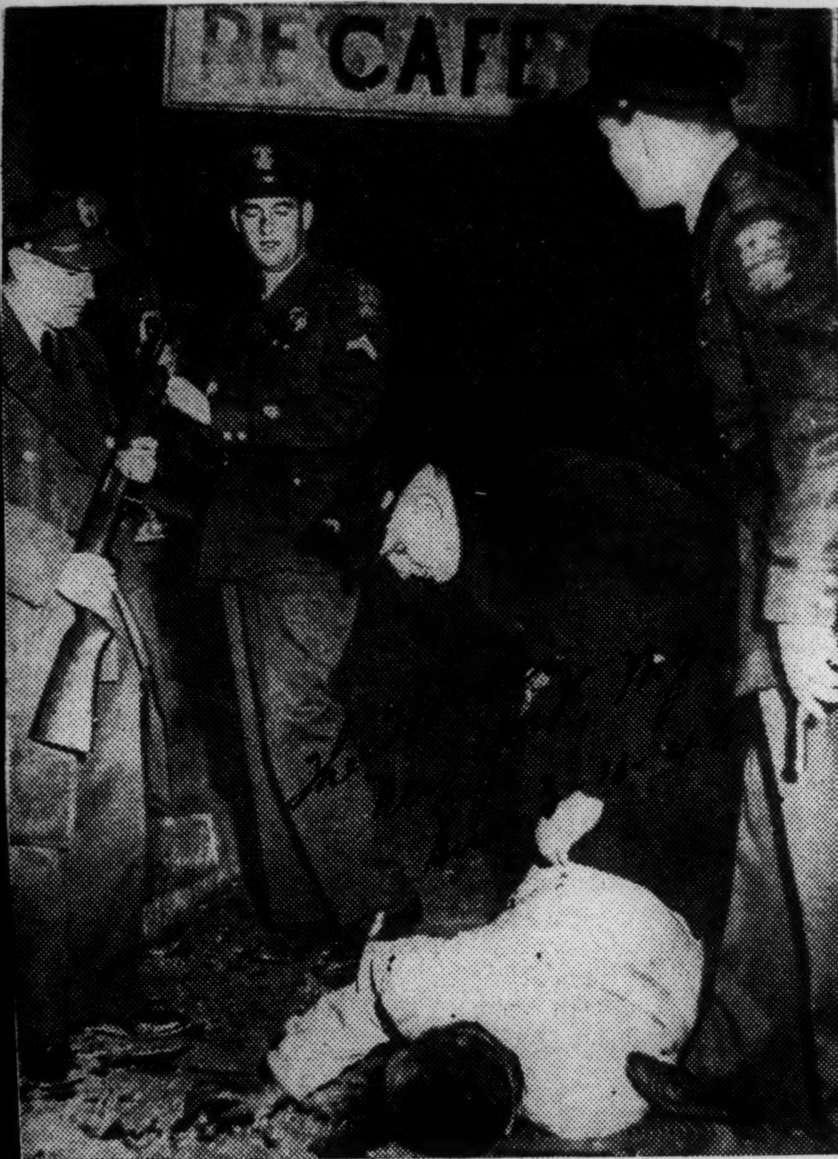
Tues 4-9-46

Mr. Neuberger, who had to ob n a military pass to go through Columbia, heard from the lips of the sheriff, the State Director of Defense, and the Governor of Tennessee the brazen defense of the gestapo-like pogrom. The sheriff stated for public quotation that he ordered his men "to shoot to kill," when he led 1,100 armed gangsters, many of them State troopers, into the Negro community of 3,000-odd Negro men, women and children.

The most significant thing about the entire case, Mr. Neuberger said, was the fact that the Negro people "made it very clear that they were not going to be lynched," that the Negro boys who had fought for what they hoped would be democracy at home were determined to fight for it at home, too, if need be. This determination led them to stand up against armored trucks, machine guns and tommy guns wielded by the sheriff's trigger-happy mobsters.

Charles Hill, business agent of the AFL Hotel Service Workers, followed Rev. Lockwood with a spirited appeal for financial aid to Columbia, and $548 was contributed, $463 of it is cash and the rest in pledges.

Mrs. Virginia Durr of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, a white Southerner, made an eloquent appeal for support to the fight to make the South a real part of the nation. Miss Cecelia Jefferson gave a brilliant recital of Langston Hughes' "Let America Be America Again." The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Dorothy Funn, Legislative Director of the National Negro Congress.



BLOOD FLOWS IN TENNESSEE—While a wounded Negro lies on the ground, the police who felled him go through his pockets—aftermath of a night of police terror in Columbia, Tenn.

REV. CALVIN LOCKRIDGE

pastor of Mt. Ararat Bapt. church at Columbia, who was among the colored leaders indicted by the Maury County Grand Jury the past week. Like all of the other indicted men, Rev. Lockridge is out on bond furnished by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

56a

How Cops Pillaged Negro Community

The Worker New York, N.Y.

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—James Morton, local Negro undertaker, pointed to an electric sign and a clock in front of his establishment and said: "That's the only thing they did not destroy." His funeral home was in the path of the uniformed mob of state highway patrolmen that came roaring through the Jimcrow section Feb. 25, spraying the area with machine guns, bent on lynching Navy veteran Jimmy Stephenson because he defended his mother against blows from a white man.

56a

"Men in uniform of the state of Tennessee did this," Morton told me as we entered a shambles, once his casket display room. We were looking down on two-foot high letters KKK carefully marked with a white powder across the top of his most expensive casket.

All the casket linings were destroyed by the hoodlum patrolmen. They had poured quarts of red embalming fluid on the cloth and cut it with knives. Sun 3-10-46

All windows of the Morton place were shot out, the Venetian blinds smashed to splinters, floor-lamps torn up and destroyed, books and records strewn to the four winds and a heavy iron stove literally beaten apart. With fiendishness, these men, sworn to uphold the law and order, ripped and tore the chapel draperies. Pieces of wreckage are on top of a Bible on the pulpit.

PATH OF RUIN

This is what I saw nine days after the Negro community had thwarted the lynching with a few shotguns, and six days after two Negroes were shot to death by five patrolmen in the Maury County Jail. I went down into the one-block-long colored business section with the town's leading Negroes when they were permitted to return to their places of business without police passes.

Mr. Morton, 75-year-old Julius Blair, his son Sol, a barber, and another son, Charles, drug store proprietor, guided me through the wreckage.

No wrecking job could have been more complete. The barber shop was a pile of junk, with all windows out, mirrors shattered and barber tools stolen. There are 34 bullet holes in front of the shop. Every juke box in E. Eighth St. is smashed to bits and the money removed. One of these was in a little store owned by Earl McCaw.

It will cost thousands of dollars for Mr. Blair to reopen his drug store. All glass cases, the cash register, windows, juke box and chairs were beaten to rubble in Ivria Davison's restaurant. But he's open for business.

A state guard's bayonet was shoved through the music box in Charles Harris' refreshment store. The looters stole $50 from his till and carted off all his beer to the 20th Century Club several miles away, where they staged a "party."

NO COMPENSATION

Is the state planning compensation? No. Mr. Morton, a highly cultured man; the Blairs, Columbia's leading Negro citizens, and 13 others are out on bail ranging from $250 to $5,000 awaiting all-white Grand Jury action on charges of attempt to murder and carrying firearms. Sun 3-10-46

The fact that the last 13 Negroes were granted the simple legal right to bail last Wednesday was considered a victory here. This gives a general idea of the hard fight ahead for freedom of all the innocent and heroic colored citizens and punishment of the white killers and gangster marauders.

But there are white Southerners—CIO and AFL trade unionists, members of the clergy and others such as the militant Tennessee attorney Maurice Weaver and the Negro attorney Z. A. Looby—who have made this case their No. 1 fight.

W. E. B. DuBois

The Winds Of Time

Chicago Defender

Race Riot Patterns

THERE ARE CERTAIN patterns about race riots which the public forgets. There is always wide publicity about actual occurrences like at Columbia, Tennessee and more or less successful attempt to punish at least some of the perpetrators. But of the events, and especially the economic events, preceding and following the riots there is apt to be little knowledge and less action.

Sat 2-2-46

I know this part of Tennessee fairly well. As a student at Fisk I was less than fifty miles from Columbia and I taught a country school near Lebanon not seventy-five miles away. This is a part of the upper South which is becoming industrialized and the patterns follow certain well-known outlines: poor white population eager for decent paying work, a smaller Negro population equally eager. There would be none or few labor unions. The whites secure the better paid work in local factories; the Negroes get jobs at less pay and their lower pay threatens the wage standards of whites. There would be little intercourse, understanding and much less friendship between these two classes. The merchant class would prey upon both and the capitalists own the factories, the surrounding farms and the rental housing, The political power of the Negro would be very small because unorganized and the officials would all be white serving and catering to a white constituency. There would be a nucleus of colored people with some education, a number of them owning their homes; a small number running businesses and a few professional men. It is to the interest of the owners of capital both to encourage and discourage race friction: to encourage economic rivalry so as to keep down wages and keep out labor unions; to discourage any outbreak that would destroy capital or drive away workers.

Many Will Emigrate

Chicago, Ill.

THEN COMES the riot nearly always comparatively trivial and vague in its causes. Whatever punishment may be secured after long effort is not very important because the actual perpetrators are those who have allowed racial friction to grow. They are the editors of local newspapers, the preachers in white churches who have kept still, the employers of labor who have said nothing and yet encouraged race feeling. During the riot there is not only the flare-up but always the systematic disarming of the Negroes, the jailing and perhaps killing of numbers of innocent people and then the setting of the armed police belonging to the city, county or state upon the Negro community to loot and hurt and shoot the Negroes. The looting is apt to be systematic. Many of the poor whites take this opportunity to steal from the Negroes whose economic prosperity they have envied and to ruin Negro business. After the riot comes however the much more important social events. For a generation or longer Columbia is going to be known to every Negro in this part of the South as the place where a riot and lynching occurred. They are going to avoid it. Those colored people who are able, some quickly and some slowly, will migrate from Columbia. They will go first to Nashville. If they have a little property they will sell it or give it away. The lower strata of loafers and ne'er-do-wells will probably stay. They will be offered high wages to induce them to work because the better workers will leave. Those who do migrate and have lost their property are the real victims of the riot. For them there ought to be a rehabilitation fund: they ought to receive reimbursement for their lost homes and above all they should be given economic opportunity. The Negro community where they go should regard them quietly as first line fighters, veterans returned from the front to find well-paid work and welcome. Sat 2-2-46

Chance for Real Social Work

USUALLY OF COURSE nothing of this sort occurs. From the earning of a decent living with a little home and social and church surroundings, they suddenly find themselves poor, in a strange noisy and hostile environment, with little chance to work and no place to live. Some of them inevitably sink into idleness and crime; some become sick and insane. They are a burden upon Chicago, upon Detroit, upon Indianapolis. Their children in school are retarded or indifferent. They swell the burden of the Negro community which is striving desperately to rise. They receive little sympathy.

Here is where real social work and uplift ought to come. A community like this which has gone mad and committed a terrible social crime ought to be a subject of continued study and the victims reimbursed to the first and second generation and given opportunity to live again. Why would not something of this sort be the peculiar chance of the Negro church?

There Was to Be a Lynchin

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Editor's Note—The sensational dispatch which follows, telling for the first time the heroic story of Negro Columbia's self-sacrifice, was filed shortly before two Negroes were killed and a third gravely wounded inside the Columbia jail. It was delayed in transmission.

By ROBERT MINOR Sat. 3.2.46

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 28.—It was clear there was to be a lynching. A fine young American veteran, 19 years old, having just returned from overseas and laid aside his Navy uniform, was to be taken to the Court House Square and hanged. But there was no lynching. Groups of white men with rifles and pistols were gathering on the square. Another man left the square and entered a store, bought a rope, saying "we are going to hang two Negroes tonight. If I don't hang them Negroes, I hope somebody will put the rope around my neck." A Negro was in another part of the store, heard the remark and quickly ran out.

While this was happening, an automobile with four policemen left the vicinity of the square, headed towards, where Jimmy Stevenson, the Negro veteran, had been taken into the business sections of that Negro neighborhood to be in touch with friends.

One or more Negroes came running, telling the neighbors that a lynch mob was coming. Within a few minutes every light was out, and many neighbors were standing in a ring around their settlement, a fow of them having shotguns.

The car with the four policemen approached the place, the white faces were made out in the dusk. Shots were exchanged and the four white policemen, each with a few birdshot in him, turned around and returned to the Square without Jimmy Stevenson. Sat. 3-2-46

This is the only reason why there was not a lynching in this beautiful city of Columbia last Monday night.

Meantime, by another road out of some part of Columbia, the young ex-Navy man went away. The seven or eight hours gained by the prevention of the entrance of the policemen's car made the difference between life and death for an American veteran.

The police chief now says that the car went to get Jim Stevenson in order to protect him. We have heard that one before. The chief of police is the man, according to the opinions expressed to me by a number of Negroes with whom I talked here today, who was the most active of the three police officers who are alleged to have beaten Mrs. Gladys Stevenson savagely and torn her clothes almost off on the sidewalk in front of the radio repair shop.

This was the man who was going to protect Jim Stevenson.

But the National Guard and State Highway Police? They were coming up throughout the night, being deputized and acting as police officers. They understood that the Negro people were not passive in the matter of defense of their homes. They waited through the night.

Then in the morning, with several hundred tommy guns and regular army rifles against fourteen shotguns, two target rifles and a fierce-looking bread knife—now on exhibit as the dread armament accumulated by the Negroes—the National Guard and State Highway police entered the business section of the Negro committee. They came shooting. Don't take my word for it. The **Maury Democrat**—weekly paper of Columbia, says this morning: **"They blasted a number of buildings occupied by Negroes business establishments with machine guns and rifles."** Sat. 3-2-46

Negroes today, of every walk of life, described to me the scene in which the deputies took revenge for their frustration.

The guardsmen wrecked homes and shops, smashed tables and windows, tore the green baize off the pool tables and were seen playing catch with the ivory pool and billiard balls afterwards.

Now, the "hot" lynching having failed, the "cold" lynching apparently is beginning tonight. The all-white grand jury is sitting, and is, so-to-say, "sifting" what is called the evidence, including the oaths of policemen who beat up Mrs. Stevenson and her veteran son.

There has never been in the memory of old inhabitants a Negro on a grand jury or petty jury in Columbia courts, other than federal.

The intention appears to be to indict one-third or one-half of the Negroes including the leading business men, and to allow the rest to go.

But Columbia is a good town—much better than you think. Big and fine trade unions are here, including the Mine and Smelter Unions, including both Negro and white workers. Listen to a whie waitress. She said: **"those Negroes defended their homes, and they done right."**

The people of Columbia did not do this dirty job. As no less than a dozen Negroes told me today: "Who done it? The law done it."

The mob was in uniform.

'A Negro's Place? It's With the People

By HARRY RAYMOND Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 13.—I want to tell about some citizens of this town, their problems and the relationship of their problems to yours and mine. There's Julius Blair. He is the drug store man here—that is, he had a drugstore until the morning of Feb. 26, when it was completely destroyed and looted by lynch-bent white law officers. Born of Negro slave parents shortly after the Civil War, Mr. Blair has long been a respected, law-abiding leader of the colored community.

On the night the armed white men came down into that community firing their guns, and when they were barred by a few blasts of buckshot from their aim to lynch Navy war veteran Jimmy Stephenson and his mother, Blair, undertaker James Morton and other leading Negroes were meeting outside the area on a plan to raise funds for a new school. But today Blair is one of more than a score of defendants, released from jail on heavy bail and charged with crimes ranging up to attempted murder.

"To think it would come to this," he told me. "I lived here all my life, raised a respectable family. I've never been in any kind of trouble. I don't drink, smoke or swear. I even conformed to the white man's rules. And now here I am, an old man, set and ready for my biggest fight."

"Yes, that's good," Mr. Blair fighting man as he nears his 76th year.

"They talk about keeping the Negro in his place," he said as we sat in his wrecked store. "Where is the Negro's place? In an airplane it's up in the air. In a bus it's in the back. In a train it's in the front. But in the fight for democracy it's with the people."

I told this wonderful old man about white people I knew all over America who were rallying to do something to stop the evil acts against his people. He said he knew about that, and told me about a few white men and women in Columbia who were fighting by the side of the Negroes. N.Y. N.Y.

"Yes, that's good," Mh. Blair declared. Tenn.

He paused for a moment to examine a machine gun bullet hole in his front door. 3-14-46

"That's good," he repeated. "But from what they're doing, talking war with Russia and atombombs, there may not be enough time." Thrusday

Solomon Blair, son of Julius, came in while we were talking, and presented me with a .45 caliber copper jacket bullet he dug from the walls of his barber shop next store. There were 34 such slugs fired through the front of his place by state patrolmen. He, too, is scheduled to face an all-white jury on the attempt to murder charge.

After Solomon, his brother Charles and his father were released from the County Jail on bail, Mayor Eldridge Denham declared all was "peace and quiet." That very night five rounds from a machine gun tore through the windows of the Blair home.

"You can see, Mr. Raymond, we're not backin' up," Solomon Blair said, as we discussed the enormous task of breaking the lynch terror and building a defense for more than a score of Negroes facing Dixie Jimcrow justice. Thrusday

"We're not backing up an inch."

That's the spirit with which the 3,000 Negroes in this town are facing the issue today.

Columbia, Tenn.

RIOT DAMAGE NEAR $50,000

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh Pa.

MEMPHIS—(ANP)—Destruction of Section While Under State Guard, Lawyer says: Expressing belief that the Federal grand jury investigation of the Columbia riots "will bring light into some dark corners," Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney and NAACP counsel, told the associations Memphis unit last week that bewteen $30,000 and $50,000 damage had been done to property of Negroes in Columbia while State guard and highway patrolmen were in charge. Sat. 5.20.46

Describing the general pattern of news stories on the riot as a "complete whitewash" and naming signed articles in the Chattanooga Times in particular, Weaver told his audience that "every Negro business establishment in Columbia was raided and rat poison spread on the floors of many of them."

Grand Jury Calls Guard In Columbia Race Riot

Montgomery, Ala. Advertiser

NASHVILLE, TENN., May 27.—(AP)—A federal grand jury summoned five Tennessee State Guard officers today to testify on events concerning the February racial tumult in Columbia, Tenn., while the Maury County circuit court prepared to hear tomorrow arguments on a motion to set aside indictments against 30 Negro defendants.

The five guard officers, all of whom were on duty during the disorders, were the first witnesses called as the federal investigative body resumed its inquiry into possible civil rights violations in the Columbia case. Two Negroes were killed and a dozen other persons wounded in the disturbance which grew out of an argument between a Negro and a white radio repair man. Tues

At Columbia District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus (local prosecutor) reported that counsel for the Negro defendants would call 72 witnesses in support of their plea to have the indictments voided. Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who filed the motion, contended that the state grand jury was prejudiced because no Negroes served on it. 5-29-46

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Columbia Jury Prepares 'Charges'

Daily Worker

By ROBERT MINOR

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — It just happened that selection of a new Grand Jury for this county was scheduled to begin on the very day that the attempt was made here to lynch the young American war veteran James C. Stephenson, Jr. New York

The Grand Jury was named on the second day, while the smoke of the gunpowder used in shooting up the Negro homes and business houses of Columbia was still floating in the air.

Negroes were solely defending themselves and fighting to prevent a lynching—a struggle in which the only fatal blood was drawn by five policemen who fired at three yards range with tommy-guns at three Negro prisoners seated on chairs in a jail room where the police had been questioning them for five hours.

The only aggression was by white men. The only dead are Negroes. Fri. 3-27-46

Mark Of The Klan

Yet the Grand Jury consists of 12 white men, at least one of whom is known to hold the views of the Ku Klux Klan. The mark of the KKK left by the uniformed mob inscribed on a coffin in the center of the ruins of the Negro district seems to have a present significance.

The Grand Jury selected by white men from a panel from which Negroes were excluded, consists solely of white men, to pass judgment on Negroes. Constitutional law was flouted in doing this.

Although the rioting was done solely by white men, and almost solely by men armed and uniformed by the state, all of those thus far under serious charges are the Negroes who resisted the crime if they had anything to do with it at all. Their indictment should be worded "for opposing a lynching."

Apparently worried by the obvious character of the authorities' actions as the virtual continuation of the lynching attempt, Attorney General Bumpus has indicated to the press that some white men may be among the indicted.

But the selection of the Grand Jury was determined by the guiding principle that its function is to continue the struggle of certain white men against Negroes.

Today it was stated at the court house that indictments will probably be returned tonight or Friday. Fri. 3-27-46

Meantime, more and more information is coming to light, filling out the picture of the heroic self defense of a Negro community, and its courageous determination to prevent the lynching of a young Navy veteran who drew a savage attack upon himself by defending his mother.

Among the facts now developing, is that the young Negroes, many of them veterans, who stood guard in the Negro section that fatal Monday night to prevent the lynching of Jimmy Stephenson, outnumbered the white civilian mobsters by two to one. This explains why the white mobsters didn't dare enter, but waited until 500 uniformed men performed the crime at the break of dawn the next day.

OFFICERS CALLED IN COLUMBIA CASE

Age Herald, Birmingham, Ala.

NASHVILLE, May 26 — (AP)—A Federal Grand Jury summoned five Tennessee State Guard officers today to testify on events concerning the February racial tumult in Columbia, Tenn., while the Maury County Circuit Court prepared to hear tomorrow arguments on a motion to set aside indictments against 30 Negro defendants.

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At Columbia Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus reported that counsel for the Negro defendants would call 72 witnesses in support of their plea to have the indictments voided. Attorneys for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who filed the motion, contend that the state Grand Jury was prejudiced because no Negroes served on it. 5-28-46

Bumpus said the state also would call a number of witnesses.

PROBE 'OUTSIDE INFLUENCES' IN MOVE TO STIFLE PROTESTS

Daily Worker New York, New York

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 5.—FBI agents are in this town today investigating "outside" influences. Also being probed by Department of Justice men, according to Sheriff J. Underwood, is ownership of a few shotguns and other small arms allegedly seized in Negro homes last week after the colored community heroically fought off an attempt to lynch James C. Stephenson, 19-year-old Negro Navy veteran.

The cry of "outside agitation," characterized only yesterday by Police Chief J. W. Griffin as "pure folly," has been part of an official campaign to terrorize Negroes, indignant white Tennesseans and persons throughout the nation who are protesting the lynch violence and the shooting to death by five State highway patrolmen of two Negroes in the county jail last Thursday. Wed 3-6-46

To keep this bogey alive, the sheriff cited a letter sent from Philadelphia to a "high Columbia official." The letter, according to the sheriff, resented last week's events here and said many Philadelphians were ready to come to the aid of the Negroes who had been arrested.

This letter and "other information" the sheriff said, are in the hands of the FBI.

The entire official investigation is being directed against the Negro populations, which turned back with bird guns police who came as the van of a lynch party, thus saving the life of the Negro veteran. No attempt has been made to arrest the man whom the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Negro Baptist pastor, said entered a store to purchase a rope to "hang the Negroes."

LYNCH LEADER FREE

Charges have been made that Marshall McKee, a local man, was one of the leaders of the armed mob, estimated at from 50 to 75 that started out to lynch young Stephenson after he defended his mother against an attack by a white radio repairman. McKee has not been arrested. Nor have other known members of the mob been held.

The five state highway patrolmen who shot to death William F. Gordon and James Johnson, Negroes, in the county jail are Cpl. Bill Griffin, Sgt. Dave White, Patrolman C. A. Cartwright, Sgt. Fred Waldrip and division Chief J. J. Jackson. No charges have been filed against them. They said they opened fire after Gordon picked up a rifle and fired.

Many citizens here cast grave doubt on the gun story. They say prisoners are not questioned in rooms with loose guns laying about, or, they point out, if Gordon had a gun when he was shot down it was "put in his hands by his killers."

The only white persons being "checked" in connection with the violence, which left the Negro business section in a shambles, according to Sheriff Underwood, are those "not prominently connected with the citizenship of Columbia."

HIDE FROM TERROR

Prominent Columbia Negroes, jailed last Wednesday when highway patrolmen conducted illegal raids and searches of their homes have been released on bond. They are James Morton, undertaker, Solomon Blair and his father Julius, owners of a drug store and other business places; and Calvin Lockridge, Baptist clergyman. They have set up temporary residence in another city as a precaution against further violence.

Jimmy Stephenson, who escaped the lynch mob, and his mother are also residing with friends outside this town. Wed 3-6-46

A hearing on a habeas corpus writ for release of Negroes still held prisoner is scheduled tomorrow before circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram. Petitioners for the writ are Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, NAACP attorney and Z. Alexander Looby, Nashbille Negro attorney.

Arriving on the scene was special assistant U. S. Attorney General James E. Ruffin for what was called an investigation to determine if violations of federal law has been involved.

A 'Liberal' Outlook on Lynching

Daily Worker

By CLAUDIA JONES

PM's editors recently asked Jennings Perry, editor of the Nashville Tennessean to do a "behind the scenes" story on the anti-Negro violence in Columbia, Tennessee. New York N.Y.

56a

Undoubtedly, this is in line with **PM's** taking up **some** issues affecting the Negro people. But since no editorial comment accompanied Mr. Perry's piece, it leads one to suspect that this is **PM's** "line" on this vital issue.

Perry complacently notes that there was nothing unusual for the Tennessee highway patrol to be rushed in to devastate and invade the Negro community. Of this Gestapo-like terror, he simply says that the same thing was being done "10 days ago" by the same state patrol **"on the report that the Sheriff was being lynched"** in another county where no Negroes live. Mon 3-11-46

Here we have a typical bourgeois-liberal (acceptance of the status-quo) approach to the terror against the Negro people.

To put it another way: Mr. Perry is saying: "What is so bad anyway with the 'inexcusable nastiness' (his term for death and lynch terror against Negro citizens) on the part of the highway patrolmen and the government officials of Tennessee? They were only performing their duty."

AIDS WHITEWASH

This is nothing but an aid to the official whitewash of the lynchers of the Negro people in Tennessee, Freeport, Long Island, and elsewhere. It is an "equalization" of responsibility. It is a go-signal to the terrorist, pro-fascist hoodlums that they can expect protection from the powers-that-be in city and state governments.

Mr. Perry darn well knows that it is the Jimcrow conditions under which the Negro people live, that explains **why**, though in the nearby county, he so glibly mentions, there was **no** terror, there **was** terror against the Negro community in Columbia.

Mr. Perry's own comment further clinches this observation. He states: While it is true that all large cities in Tennessee **"have their Harlems"** a Negro **"is seldom seen"** in certain parts of Tennessee.

Well, why do we have "Harlems" in every city of the land? Is it because the Negro people want it so? It is because of Jimcrow and ghetto living conditions; of **forcible** exclusion (through written and unwritten laws) of Negroes from political, economic and social life. Hence, Mr. Perry's reference can be nothing more than a complete acquiescence and propping-up of the Jimcrow status of the Negro people.

'GOOD RELATIONS'

True, Mr. Perry takes pride in the ordinarily "good relations" between Negroes and whites in his state. He would not go so far as "the type of white politician" like U.S. Sen. Herman Ross who advocates "depriving the Negro of all civil rights till he can be sent back to Africa."

To say the least, it quite escapes Mr. Perry that Bilboism and imperialist propaganda are abetted by his "liberal" acceptance of the Jimcrow conditions under which the oppressed Negro people live. No wonder Mr. Perry can say "there is very little political discrimination . . . though Negroes never get elected to office."

It follows therefore that Perry's (and also **PM's?**) major conclusion is: there is really nothing to worry about in the spreading anti-Negro violence.

After all, Perry argues, the "race question has been here ever since the two races have." It is "an ancient inherited problem." And what has "edged it?" The drive perhaps on the part of American imperialism to destroy the war-time gains of the Negro people and the working class? The use by American imperialists of the Hitlerite scapegoat tactic of lynch as they drive towards World War III? Mon 3-11-46

No indeed! Perry considers "the worst fly in the ointment of race relations" the "departure of Negro women from the white kitchens" which has "stirred quite a white fury on the distaff side."

True, he says—and quite rightly—that Negro women "do not mean to go back if they can help it." But his whole polemic really grovels before the gods of imperialism and "white supremacy."

It is too late in history even for Perry, and **PM** to be making light of these incipient seeds of fascism in our own country. Instead of placing "equal blame" it is time to demand the speedy enforcement of **official responsibility** of the Deweys and others for punishing the lynchers of Freeport, Long Island and Columbia, Tennessee.

Let us remember the lesson of the German people: History will not excuse those who help fascism either by "liberal excuses" or by the conscious use of the ideological weapon of "Aryan supremacy."

Lynchers' Time-Bomb Wrecks A Peaceful Negro Community

The Worker. New York N.Y.

By CARL HIRSCH

Sun 3-3-46

Special Correspondent for The Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—This town is as peaceful as a soiled snake. And what happened here this week could happen any week in any of the similar thousands of 'peaceful" southern towns where anti-Negro violence is a time bomb ticking toward zero hour.

56a

A Negro woman is attacked. Her son springs to her defense. And before you can say the word "Lynch," armed mobs of whites are roving through the streets like frothing animals, death spitting from their guns, pillaging and pirating, and beating innocent Negroes into senselessness.

The wind-up of the lynch-mad orgy is that scores of Negroes are in prison facing long prison terms.

That's the "Columbia Case."

The way they explain it here officially is that the Negroes "are getting out of hand."

They are not far off the track when they look for "outside agitators." But the "agitators" are precisely the Rankins and the Bilboes. It is no accident that such racist violence follows closely on the FEPC filibuster in the U. S. Senate and similar anti-Negro incitement which has been the feature of this session of Congress.

In the Courthouse Square of Columbia, Tenn., sit scores of white hoodlums, loafers, floaters. A block away begins the sharp incline which drops down into the hollow which is the Negro community. It is a poor community, but hard-working. Most of the Negroes work in the nearby phosphate mines and plants of the TVA.

Suddenly there is a crash of breaking glass. In a radio store on the square a Negro woman has been brutally assaulted by a white radio man. Her son, a war veteran, struggles to defend her.

The police arrive and arrest the Negro woman and her boy.

The radio repairman is William Fleming. His brother is Flo Fleming, a state patrolman and a Democratic candidate for sheriff.

That happened last Monday afternoon. Sun. 3-3-46

That night and the early morning following will be remembered by the Negro people of this town as a nightmare.

A band of whites, hoodlums and "respected" business men raided the Negro community. They opened fire down the streets, fired through store windows and into homes, they set upon defenseless Negroes and slugged them mercilessly. Wild with hysteria and liquor, they run amuck, leaving a shambles in their wake.

No Negro in Columbia slept that night. In the morning, they were in groups, in a funeral parlor here, a restaurant there.

They had gathered a few squirrel guns and were fearfully awaiting the next attack.

It came the following day. This time, it was the state patrolmen, the police, the militia. This time it was with machine guns and riot guns.

There was no resistance. The police battered their way into the little "strongholds."

The Negroes were lined up like captives. Their few small fireams were carted away as "evidence."

69 IN JAIL

Sun. 3-3-46

Sixty-nine were held in prison, bound over to the Grand Jury, which was already assembled for a routine session. The charges range up to "attempted murder," which carries a penalty up to 21 years of imprisonment.

There is not a shred of evidence that a single Negro fired a shot. There is no evidence that a single Negro did anything except to act in self-defense.

And yet there can be little doubt that these 69 Negroes could be speedily railroaded to prison.

At this moment, their only hope lies in thundering protest which must echo across the country.

The vigorous and concerted outcry of America's decent citizenry is the only thing that stands be-

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White Union Men Toured Columbia Held Back Civilian Mob

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Wed 3-13-46

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn. March 12.—One positive force here in the struggle against the deeply ingrained Jimcrow pattern that errupted on Feb. 25 into armed war against 3,000 Negro citizens is a small labor union local.

56a

That union—Local 646, Federal Chemical and Acid Workers of the Mine, Mill and Smelters, CIO—has inscribed on its banner the militant slogan of equal rights for the colored people.

As soon as the word was passed from neighbor to neighbor that a lynch mob had gathered in Court House Square bent on hanging Jimmy Stephenson, Navy war veteran, and his mother, individual white members of this union moved through the countryside and the town speaking to excited individuals and groups warning them not to join in any action against the Negro community.

KEPT MOB DOWN

The action of these few individual white men is said to have had an effect in keeping the mob down to an estimated 50 to 75.

But local police under command of Chief Walter Griffin and machinegun-armed state highway patrolmen led by State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar, tread in ground where the noisy Court House civilian mob hesitated to go. Word had got around that the Negro population might resist.

And when white faces peered through the blacked-out Negro business section and shots blazed from the vicinity of where these white men stood, a clatter of buck and bird shot came from another direction and struck in their midst. These white men, later identified as local police, retired picking shot out of their evil hides. A lynching was then and there averted.

A NAZI POGROM

What went on afterward—the mad rampage of shooting, looting and destruction of the Negro business section—by state highway patrolmen and guardsmen—was nothing more nor less than an American copy of Nazi storm troop action against a minority. Here the minority were Negroes.

The CIO men, who had exerted considerable influence among the civilian population, were not well enough organized or in sufficient numbers to avert the horrors perpetrated by the white men in uniform. Wed 3-13-46

But these CIO men played an important role after these events. While certain townspeople were trying to talk up further action against the Negroes, the white CIO men were busy telling the true story of what happened to both white and Negro workers in the Armour, International Mine and Chemical and Virginia-Carolina chemical plants, phosphate enterprises organized by the CIO.

Reports from these plants, where Negro and white workers work side by side, and where they meet side by side without discrimination in union meetings with both white and colored officers, show they continued to work and associate on a friendly basis.

But in the Victor Chemical and the National Carbon plants, where the AFL Operating Engineers local Jimcrows the Negro in both union and job affairs, there was considerable talk about "going out and kill the Negroes."

There are white men in the AFL union, too, who did heroic work during the terrible days to keep the lynch violence from spreading. They are fighting to destroy the Jimcrow pattern of their organization. They are trusted friends of the Negroes, fighting by their side.

They told me they plan also to work to make the political weight of the people felt in the coming elections when State Highway Patrolman Flo Fleming, leader of the lynchers, will have his name on the ballot as candidate for Maury County Sheriff.

Tomorrow

James C. Stephenson, the young Negro lad who was defended against lynchers by the Negro residents of Columbia, Tenn., tells his story of the events that preceded the assault on the Tennessee Negro community.

Stephenson's factual, vivid account was given in a personal interview with Carl Hirsch, Daily Worker correspondent. The full interview will be published in tomorrow's issue.

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ween these people and a monstrous frameup.

Terror in Mink Slide

Newsweek

56a

Last Monday in Columbia, Tenn., a farm and mule-trading center of 12,000 and onetime home of President James K. Polk, a Negro woman and her son pushed a white radio repairman through a plateglass window. It was a minor incident, unimportant in itself. Mon. 3-11-46

But soon afterward rumors spread through Mink Slide, the squalid Harlem for Columbia's 3,000 Negroes. The Negroes heard that white mobs were gathering in the main square. They remembered that, as recently as 1933, a Negro was lynched outside Columbia. They heard that the whites were buying rope for new "necktie parties." New York, N.Y.

Fear-crazed, some Negroes barricaded themselves in their homes. Others gathered in armed groups. A few well-aimed shots blacked out the street lights. A burst from a shotgun wounded four policemen, half the town's force. All night long, sporadic gunfire kept Mink Slide in terror. Miraculously, no one was killed.

At dawn 500 Tennessee highway police and guardsmen, who overnight had ringed Mink Slide with riot guns and bayonets, launched a house-to-house search for weapons, exchanging shots with Negroes who barred their doors. They arrested 101 Negroes and confiscated 400 weapons, ranging from squirrel rifles and razors to an ancient flintlock and a souvenir German machine gun. Two days later, two Negro prisoners were killed by their guards when one of the Negroes, who was being questioned, grabbed a confiscated rifle and began shooting.

A TENNESSEE STATE HIGHWAY PATROLMAN, Wed. 2-27-46 accompanied by armed civilians, peers cautiously around the corner of a building during a night of disorder at Columbia, Tenn., in which four policemen and six civilians were wounded. The situation quieted down after highway patrolmen and National Guardsmen threw patrols around a negro section known as "Mink Slide." The outbreak started after a dispute between a negro woman and a radio repairman in a shop on the public square. (AP Wirephoto)

Patrolmen Seize Guns After Columbia Riot

Montgomery Advertiser

Montgomery, Alabama

Ten Persons Wounded, [illegible]y Arrested During Racial Disturbances [illegible]iddle Tennessee

COLUMBIA, TENN., Feb. 26.—State Patrolmen and Guardsmen completed a search of sections heavily populated with Negroes late today, confiscating an estimated 300 weapons in a move to prevent recurrence of violent disorders which resulted in the wounding of 10 persons and arrest of 70 others since last night.

Meanwhile, Mayor Eldridge Denham imposed a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew and directed that "all persons except those engaged in maintaining order or necessary business remain off the streets during those hours."

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar ordered the house-to-house search in "both Negro and white sections from where we think some of this trouble is emanating." Wed 2-27-46

Both he and Mayor Denham said order had been restored after Columbia spent a tense night punctuated by sporadic gunfire.

Bomar estimated 300 automatic rifles, shotguns, pistols, knives, razors and other weapons were seized in the house-to-house search. A considerable quantity of ammunition also was seized.

Governor Arrives

Gov. Jim McCord, who ordered the armed forces to Columbia, arrived this afternoon from Nashville. "We're gravely concerned over the maintenance of order and our forces will remain here as long as it is necessary to keep order," the Governor said.

Of the 70 persons arrested 68 were Negroes who were held on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with attempt to commit murder. Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus said the cases would be presented the Maury County Grand Jury immediately. Columbia is the county seat.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood attributed the disturbance to high feeling engendered by an altercation yesterday involving a Negro woman, her son and a white radio repairman and the subsequent wounding of four policemen who went into the Negro populated section known as "Mink Slide."

The sheriff called upon the Governor for the militia and patrol last night after four of the city's eight policemen were wounded, one critically, by a shotgun blast on a street in Mink Slide. The section of the city in which Negro businesses are located had been blacked out earlier when the street lights were shattered by gunfire.

Patrolman Will Wilsford, 60, was wounded critically by buckshot in the head, mouth and chest. The others, Patrolman Sam Richardson, Police Chief J. W. Griffin and Patrolman Bernard Stofel, were not seriously hurt.

Shortly after midnight two white men were wounded when they ventured into Mink Slide. A Negro also was wounded.

At daybreak when patrolmen led by Bomar moved into the milita-surrounded ara three more Negroes were felled by tommy-guns of the patrolmen. There were unverified reports that at least one Negro was killed.

Meanwhile, authorities checked incoming long distance telephone calls which they said were intended for Negro leaders.

A highway patrol official, who declined use of his name, said several calls had been received during the day at the A. J. Morton and Son Funeral Home. Among other places, he said, the calls came from Columbus, Ga., Chicago, and Nashville.

Morton was one of 12 Negroes arrested when patrolmen entered his establishment shortly after daybreak. Wed 2-27-46

Bomar said the occupants of the place offered no resistance but that the patrolmen were fired upon from a dance hall across the street as they approached. The fire was answered by blasts from tommy guns.

The 12 men, Bomar declared, were charged with assault with intent to commit murder. Four shotguns, two small caliber rifles and a pistol were found in their possession, along with several opened bottles of whisky, the commissioner reported.

At the meeting of the militiamen and patrolmen at which he ordered the firearms search, Commissioner Bomar told the group: "It is your duty to protect both the colored and white races," he added:

"There is no doubt in my mind but that part of this was brought about by some whites under the influence of liquor. And some of the colored persons also have been under the influence of liquor."

Mayor Denham said there had been no indication of friction between the races in this normally quiet and prosperous middle Tennessee town of 12,000 population.

"Our racial relations have been all right here and there has been no indication of anything that would build up to something like this," he said. Wed 2-27-46

In a proclamation issued this afternoon the mayor called upon "all citizens of all races to refrain from congregating, and be cool and sane and return to normal relations with each other."

Plate glass windows of shops were shattered as the patrolmen rounded up many of the Negroes arrested during their early morning mop-up of the Mink Slide area.

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10 Shot As Race Disorders Grip Tennessee City

Birmingham News

Birmingham, Alabama

Tues 2-26-46

Columbia Is Scene Of Blazing Guns; Martial Law May Be Ordered

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 26—(AP)—One hundred state highwaymen, backed up by 400 state guardsmen, moved swiftly into the Negro populated district of Columbia at dawn today after a night of riotous disorders and by mid-morning more than three score arrests had been made.

At least 10 persons were wounded in the disturbances which developed from the shooting of four Columbia policemen fired upon early last night in the section known as "Mink Slide" where the disorders centered.

The shooting followed an altercation yesterday afternoon in which Sheriff J. J. Underwood said William Fleming, 28-year-old radio repairman, was pushed through a plate glass window of his shop by a Negro woman and her son.

* * *

LYNN BOMAR, state safety commissioner, said that among the 65 persons under arrest were a number who were believed to have been the ringleaders. Twelve of the suspects were seized in a raid by highway patrolmen upon the home of a Negro undertaker.

These 12, Bomar said, were charged with attempted murder. He added that in their possession were found four shotguns, two .22 rifles and a revolver. The official said also that four open bottles of whisky were found in the place.

Two hours after the patrolmen deployed into Mink Slide occasional shots still were heard in that district. Tues 2-26-46

Mayor Eldridge Denham said "the situation still is grave" and that he was considering a request for a declaration of martial law.

When the patrolmen made their daybreak move into Mink Slide they found about 50 Negroes. Although state guardsmen had thrown a cordon around the district a number of the residents were believed by Sheriff Underwood to have fled through the lines during the night. Fifteen others had been picked up during the night.

Bomar said occupants of the Morton home offered no resistance but that shots were fired from a dance hall across the street as the officers approached. This was answered by blasts from tommy guns.

tr and pickup at 2nd graf

The patrolmen deployed swiftly through the section after units of the State Guard had maintained an all-night guard about the area.

While the highwaymen were preparing to go into "Mink Slide," Col. Victor Howard Wilson, commander of the State Guard's Second Infantry Regiment, ordered dispersal of 25 white civilians who were standing around with shotguns. They left quietly.

* * *

AS THE DAWN ZERO HOUR approached for the move-in 14 shots volleyed through the blacked-out section. There was a lapse of four minutes and more shooting was heard, some of the reports sounding like those of automatic rifles.

Brig. J. N. Dickinson, commander of the State Guard Second Brigade, was in personal command of the guardsmen, who numbered some 400 and who arrived in Columbia during the night.

At 7 a.m., Mayor Eldridge Denham, of Columbia, said "the situation still is grave" and that he was considering requesting the governor to declare martial law.

Trouble started last night after an incident in which Sheriff J. J. Underwood said a Negro woman and her son pushed a white radio repairman through the plate glass window of his shop on the public square during an argument over a repair job.

Underwood said the woman and her son, arrested on an assault charge, subsequently were released under bail, but that as word of the incident spread tension mounted and crowds began to gather in the square.

A call for assistance was sent to the State Highway Patrol by Columbia's eight-man police department and Commissioner Bomar responded with 45 patrolmen. As the situation worsened Gov. Jim McCord dispatched the state guardsmen from seven communities under Gen. Dickinson.

While the patrolmen and guardsmen were on the way Sheriff Underwood said Negroes among the public square crowd withdrew to their section of town and that when the four Columbia policemen went into the area they were fired upon.

"The four of us made two trips into this area to assure the people we would keep the peace," said Police Patrolman Vernon Stofel, who was wounded slightly.

"On our second trip we found that the street lights had been shot out. As we moved along the darkened street somebody shouted 'halt' and a shotgun blast followed."

Tues 2-26-46

PATROLMAN WILL WILSFORD, 60, who accompanied Stofel, was critically wounded by buckshot in the head and chest. The two others, Chief of Police J. W. Griffin and Patrolman Sam Richardson, were wounded slightly.

Two more white men and a Negro were wounded early today in flareups of gunplay.

As more steel-helmeted guardsmen in full field gear arrived during the early morning the troops surrounded the section.

"There is no martial law yet," said Gen. Dickinson. "We are here merely to aid the civil authorities."

Dickinson said early today that only units of his command had been ordered up thus far, but that Brig. Gen. A. Lacy Price, commander of the First Brigade, had been advised at Jackson of the situation."

"Our racial relations have been all right here and there has been no indication of anything that would build up something like this," said Mayor Denham.

"Only recently" the mayor added, "the Negroes of Columbia have collected by popular subscription $4,000 to build a new school."

Sheriff Underwood identified the principles in the radio shop affair as William Fleming, 28-year-old radio repairman, and Gladys Stephenson and her son, James.

John Fleming, brother of the repairman, appealed to the restless crowd in the public square before midnight to "let well enough alone and don't stir up more trouble."

John and William are brothers of Flo Fleming, state highway patrolman and Democratic nominee for sheriff of Maury County, of which Columbia is the seat. William was discharged from the Army last August after 26 months in the Pacific.

* * *

EARLY TODAY TWO MEN identified as Borgie Claude, 34, and James Beard, 31, ventured beyond the state guard cordon into the Mink Slide section and were shot in the legs by a blast from a rooftop sniper. They were not hurt seriously.

Shortly after the wounding of the four policemen last night an unsuspecting tourist, whose car bore California license plates, was passing through Columbia and drove into Mink Slide. He emerged with the rear of his car pocked by buckshot. Tues 2-26-46

Sgt. E. B. Knowles, of the State Highway Patrol, said he had to "outreason" one group of citizens who clustered before the state armory, where there is a considerable store of guns and ammunition. He said the group broke up under his persuasion.

Maj. John Finney, editor of The Columbia Herald, who is due for discharge today from the Marine Corps Reserves, went home early today and found that a blast had been fired into his place. His home is 10 blocks from the trouble spot.

Throughout the night rumors flourished in Columbia. One had it that a shotgun-toting mob was headed this way from Mount Pleasant, 12 miles away. Guardsmen reconnoitered, but found nothing.

Despite his injuries, Chief Griffin stayed on duty all night. "We had heard about shots being fired down there," he said in telling how it started. "We decided to see what we could find out. I never imagined they would fire on us."

At 60, the seriously wounded Wilsford is the oldest man on Columbia's police force. Stofel, just out of the Army, said "when the shooting broke out I hit the dirt."

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2 Negroes Shot in Riot Town Jail

P. M. New York, N.Y

Special Correspondence

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Mar. 1.—Two Negroes died yesterday on the way to a Nashville hospital after they were reported shot by jail guards. They had been held in connection with rioting here last Monday.

The official version of the shooting was given in a statement from Gen. Jacob Dickinson, commander of the Middle Tennessee Brigade of the State Guard.

The general said:

"Three prisoners were being held under guard inside the jail for questioning when the prison guard became careless and one of the Negroes picked up a confiscated gun and started shooting."

Beyond this Dickinson would say nothing. Fri 3-1-46

An unofficial version of the story was that a Negro pushed Deputy Sheriff J. C. Goad, grabbed a gun, but was cut down when other guards opened fire before he could pull the trigger.

The incident failed to touch off new trouble in jittery Columbia, where 10 persons were wounded in Monday night's brush between Negroes and whites. To date, 101 Negroes have been arrested.

The Negro sections remained virtually under martial law. Helmeted state guardsmen carrying bayoneted rifles patrolled the streets.

Mayor Asks Calm In Tennessee Riot

Atlanta Constitution
Atlanta, Ga.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 26.—(UP)—A proclamation calling on "all citizens of all races" not to congregate and to preserve calm was issued late Tuesday by Mayor Eldridge Denham as 500 National Guardsmen patrolled the streets of this riot-torn city and other officers searched both white and Negro homes for weapons.

Denham asked that the population be "cool and sane" and return to normal relations with each other. Wed. 2-27-46

A house-to-house earch for weapons got under way in a 30-square block area of Columbia following the worst racial disorders in Tennessee in years.

Order was restored to this middle Tennessee town following a wild night of rioting and fear-crazed Negroes who barricaded themselves and fought a full-scale battle with police until heavily armed National Guardsmen came to the rescue.

Justice Dept. Probes Tennessee Race Riot

P. M. New York, N.Y.

State Official Blames Working Conditions in Chemical Plants

Wed 2-27-46

By Elizabeth Donahue
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17.—The Dept. of Justice today awaits an officiay report on the 18-hour riot in Columbia, Tenn., which is reported to be reaching the proportions of a crucial race conflict.

Telephone interviews with leading local citizens of Tennessee clearly indicate that the incidents resulting in the injury to seven and in the jailing of 73 Negroes and two white men arose from job and social distinctions imposed at nearby "war" plants.

Although the riot was touched off by an incident in an obscure hardware shop in Columbia, that is the story told PM by E. W. Carmack, a prominent Tennessee citizen and contender for the U. S. Senate seat held by Kenneth D. McKellar.

Carmack first quoted the State Attorney General, Paul Bumpus, of the Columbia district, as saying "trouble has been brewing for a long time because of the Negro-white working conditions" at the phosphate plants at Mount Pleasant, a small town 14 miles from Columbia.

Bumpus, according to Carmack, attributed the difficulty to the fact that "Negroes and whites were working side by side" at the Monsanta chemical plant at Mount Pleasant.

Editor Jennings Perry of the Nashville *Tennessean* told PM, however, that "for some time we have all known that Negroes were receiving lower wages than white people for the same work at this and other plants." Wed 2-27-46

Some time Monday afternoon a Negro woman and her son entered a hardware store to get their radio repaired. There was an argument, and the clerk, reportedly a Navy veteran and brother of the local sheriff-elect, went through a plate glass window. Within an hour the main square of Columbia was jammed with the local citizenry.

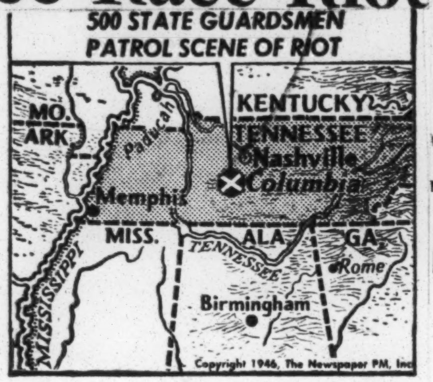
"Most of them," Carmack said, "were youngsters 18 or 19 and several carried guns. The real trouble started when, after the Negro woman and her son were jailed, they were released on $3000 bail."

A rumor of lynching swept the town. The Negroes retired to their section of town known as "Mink Side." Four local policemen, touring the Negro section, were reported shot at. Three were injured, one seriously.

Approximately 400 State police officers arrived during the night.

The United Press reported that order was restored when some 500 members of the State Guard arrived and began patrolling the streets in "Mink Side."

500 STATE GUARDSMEN PATROL SCENE OF RIOT



PM, *Feb. 27, 1946*

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3 Shot in Jail At Columbia

Atlanta Constitution
3-1-46 Ga.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 28.—(AP)—Three Negroes held for questioning in connection with racial disorders were wounded in an office of the Maury county jail Thursday.

State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar said the Negroes were shot by highway patrolmen after one of the Negroes had seized a rifle confiscated Tuesday in a house-to-house search, and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Parnell, wounding him in the left arm.

Bomar identified the Negroes as William F. Gordon, James Johnson and Napoleon Stewart. Gordon and Johnson were seriously wounded, he added.

Disorder In Tennessee

Birmingham Age Herald
Wed 2-27-46

"Our racial relations have been good, and there has been no indication of anything that would build up something like this," was Mayor Denham's comment on the race violence which swept through Columbia, Tenn., Monday night. That is something for all of us to take to heart. The experience of this little Tennessee city might be repeated elsewhere. The appearance of race relations has little to do with its substance. What really counts is the fundamental attitude of whites, on the one hand, and of Negroes, on the other.

It is impossible at this distance to say whether Mayor Denham is justified in saying that he had no reason to expect such a flare-up. One gathers that a Negro woman and her son had a row with a radio repairman, as the result of which resentment manifested itself among whites and fear among Negroes. It was when policemen went into the colored section—avowedly to reassure the residents—that they were fired on. Negroes were armed for such an emergency. Death and wounds and recriminations are the consequence of a collision which would not have occurred if race relations had been really good, or if the right interracial atmosphere has prevailed in Columbia. Wed 2-27-46

The denizens of "Mink Slide" were wrong in shooting it out, but they must have been terribly frightened when they chose that desperate resort. The reported treatment of the radio repairman cannot be excused, but other feelings must have underlain the quarrel.

The lesson for white Southerners in this affair is that they must not be content with simply drifting toward similar outbreaks of the disease of racial hatred and fear. Everybody has known that after the war trouble might come. But how much has been done to prevent clashes? In how many communities have white and colored leaders come together to keep down provocations? To what extent is the law being enforced *against everybody of all complexions* with respect to the possession of arms? What are police departments and sheriffs' offices and similar agencies doing to eliminate through moral suasion and through fair dealing the likelihood of race afrays?

Probe Going On

P.M. New York

Special Correspondence

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Mar. 14.—Paul F. Bumpus, district attorney, said here today that about 200 persons had been questioned in an 11-day investigation of the Columbia racial disturbance.

Officials declined to say what was revealed by the large amount of evidence and stacks of depositions that had been taken from testimony of persons called in for the investigation.

Bumpus said he would present the evidence to the Maury County Grand Jury before the end of the month. Thur. 3.14.46

Warning For All

B. Birmingham News

The tension that can so quickly be created in racial relations and the terrible results that may follow are exemplified in reports of trouble and violence from Columbia, Tenn. Wed 2-27-46

According to news dispatches, there was a dispute between a radio repairman and a Negro woman and her son. The repairman is said to have been pushed through the plate glass window of his shop. A crowd soon gathered in the square. Local officials sought aid. State highway patrolmen and guardsmen were sent. Meanwhile, Negroes withdrew from the public square and congregated in a residential section. Sheriff Underwood declares that four Columbia policemen were fired upon when they went into the area. Three were wounded slightly, the fourth seriously.

Two white men were reported slightly wounded when they ventured into the section. A total of 10 wounded was reported.

The police chief said he never imagined "they would fire on us." The mayor said, "Racial relations have been all right here and there has been no indication of anything that would build up something like this."

The Negro woman and her son involved in the trouble in the radio repair shop were arrested and released on bond. Later, some 65 persons were arrested, 12 charged with attempted murder.

This trouble is a warning for all. Whatever our problems in racial relations, nothing except tragedy can result from incitement and violence. Upon every citizen, white and Negro, rests the solemn duty to show mutual consideration and to seek justice and fair play under all conditions.

Of course, there could be no justification whatever for pushing a man through a plate glass window. Nor is armed resistance to the law defensible in any way.

There must be the most thorough effort to impose punishment wherever due in this case. Wed 2-27-46

Justice and the maintenance of law and order are the first objectives in this Columbia trouble. But they—and restraint, fair dealing and a constant effort to solve mutual problems—should also be the earnestly sought and continuing goals of us all.

WEAPONS SEIZED IN WIDE SEARCH FOLLOWING RIOT

Birmingham Age-Herald Wed 2-27-46 alabama, B'ham

Areas Of Tennessee City Scoured; 10 Wounded; 70 Arrests Made

COLUMBIA, Tenn., Feb. 26—(AP)—Five hundred state militiamen and highway patrolmen launched a house-to-house search for firearms in some white and Negro residential sections this afternoon in a move to prevent repetition of violent disorders which resulted in 70 arrests and wounding of 10 persons since last night.

The systematic search was ordered by State Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar who said order had been restored after Columbia spent a tense night punctuated by gunfire. Mayor Eldridge Denham likewise said the situation was in hand and that lawlessness had ceased. Wed 2-27-46

At a meeting of State Guard troops and highway patrolmen, Bomar directed them to concentrate their hunt for weapons in "both Negro and white sections from where we think some of this trouble is emanating."

In the first hour of the search the officers seized a varity of weapons, including a German machine gun and a Japanese rifle with bayonet—presumably souvenirs from the war. Shotguns also were counted in their haul, along with a considerable quantity of ammunition.

Governor Arrives

Gov. Jim McCord, who ordered the armed forces to Columbia, arrived this afternoon from Nashville. "We've gravely concerned over the maintenance of order and our forces will remain here as long as it is necessary to keep order," the governor said.

Of the 70 persons arrested 68 were Negroes who were held on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to assault with attempt to commit murder. Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus said the cases would be presented the Maury County Grand Jury immediately. Columbia is the county seat.

Sheriff J. J. Underwood attributed the disturbance to high feeling engendered by an altercation yesterday involving a Negro woman, her son and a white radio repairman and the subsequent wounding of four policemen who went into the Negro-populated section known as Mink Slide.

Shooting Brings Action

The sheriff called upon the governor for the militia and patrol last night after four of the city's eight policemen were wounded, one critically, by a shotgun blast on a street in Mink Slide. This section of the city in which Negro businesses are located had been blacked out earlier when the street lights were shattered by gunfire.

Patrolman Will Wilsford, 60, was wounded critically by buckshot in the head, mouth and chest. The others, Patrolman Sam Richardson, Police Chief J. W. Griffin and Patrolman Bernard Stofel, were not hurt seriously.

Shortly after midnight two white men were wounded when they ventured into Mink Slide. A Negro also was wounded.

At daybreak when patrolmen led by Bomar moved into the militia-surrounded area three more Negroes were felled by tommy guns of the patrolmen. There were unverified reports that at least one Negro was killed. Wed 2-27-46

Phone Calls Watched

Meanwhile, authorities checked incoming long distance telephone calls which they said were intended for Negro leaders.

A highway patrol official, who declined use of his name, said severla calls had been received during the day at the A. J. Morton and Son Funeral Home. Among other places, he said, the calls came from Columbus, Ga., Chicago and Nashville.

Morton was one of 12 Negroes arrested when patrolmen entered his establishment shortly after daybreak.

Bomar said the occupants of the place offered no resistance, but that the patrolmen were fired upon from a dance hall across the street as they approached. The fire was answered by blasts from tommy guns.

The 12 men, Bomar declared, were charged with assault with intent to commit murder. Four shotguns, two small-caliber rifles and a pistol were found in their possession, along with several opened bottles of whisky, the commissioner reported.

At the meeting of the militiamen and patrolmen at which he ordered the firearms search, Commissioner Bomar told the group: "It is your duty to protect both the colored and white races." He added:

"There is no doubt in my mind but that part of this was brought about by some whites under the influence of liquor. And some of the colored persons also have been under the influence of liquor."

Trouble Unexpected

Mayor Denham said there had been no indication of friction between the races in this normally-quiet and prosperous Middle Tennessee town of 12,000 population.

"Our racial relations have been all right here and there has been no indication of anything that would build up to something like this," he said. Wed 2-27-46

In a proclamation issued this afternoon the mayor called upon "All citizens of all races to refrain from congregating, and be cool and sane and return to normal relations with each other."

Plate glass windows of shops were shattered as patrolmen rounded up many of the Negroes arrested during their early morning mop-up of the Mink Slide area.

Brig. Gen. J. M. Dickinson, commander of the State Guard's Second Brigade, was in charge of the guards units on duty. They were drawn from Dickson, Murfreesboro, Shelbyville, Fayetteville, Nashville, Clarksville and Ashland City.

Acting Adj. Gen. Hilton Butler came here from Nashville.

The highway patrolmen came from most all parts of the state, with most of them from Middle Tennessee stations. Chief George Burdette, head of the East Tennessee Division, brought a large group from Knoxville. Others were from Chattanooga.

Columbia Looks Like Freeport -- In Eyes of Law

Daily Worker New York N.Y. Tue. 3-5-46

By HARRY RAYMOND

COLUMBIA, Tenn., March 4.—The official attitude toward last week's armed invasion of the Negro community here, resulting in the slaying of two and wounding of nine Negroes, today was very much the same as that exhibited by Freeport, N. Y., officials toward the police killing of a Negro GI and his brother there last month.

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This attitude was best expressed by Columbia's Mayor Eldredge Denham. His solution of the mob violence which rocked this polltax center for several days, was to call on the 12,000 citizens to go back to "normal" and "forget it."

That's what Mayor Cyril Ryan and Police Chief Peter Elar advised in "liberal" northern Freeport.

STATUS QUO—JIMCROW

But to return to status quo in Freeport or here in Columbia would be to sow seeds of similar future bloody events. Status quo means Jimcrow. Tue. 3-5-46

And it was Jimcrow that led the armed men into the Negro community in Columbia. It was Jimcrow that pulled the trigger in Freeport.

It should be easier, however, to put down Jimcrow in Freeport. It's not supposed to exist there under law. But here the trouble maker has an official seat in government.

Jimcrow sits in the courts of justice in Columbia. He is educator and jailer. He is, indeed, the architect who designed the town's buildings—its county courthouse, its railroad station; he installed the Negro drinking fountains, the white drinking fountains. He carved in stone the words "Colored" and "White" over the portals of railroad waiting rooms.

GUARD WITHDRAWN

And when Mayor Denham asks citizens to return to "normal" and "forget it," he becomes Jimcrow's defense attorney.

The first step in the official return to "normal" here was withdrawal today of the last of 1,000 State Guard troops. They had been patrolling the town since a mob, augmented by State Highway patrolmen and police, rampaged through the Negro quarter with death-spitting firearms.

The military withdrawal began yesterday as the first clods of damp Tennessee earth fell with hollow thuds on the coffins of William F. Gordon and James Johnson, Negroes, who were shot to death last Thursday while being grilled in the sheriff's office. Tue. 3-5-46

KILLERS NOT NAMED

Both funerals were attended by large, silent crowds of friends of the dead men. No one is being held in these killings. In fact, identity of the killer or killers has not been made public.

But Sheriff J. J. Underwood is holding an undisclosed number of Negroes in the county jail in connection with the wounding of Chief of Police J. W. Griffith and five other policemen.

The policemen are alleged to have been fired on by Negros who barricaded themselves when threatend by a violent armed mob.

Sheriff Underwood challenged a habeas corpus petition filed by NAACP Attorney Maurice Weaver demanding release of 34 Negroes allegedly held incommunicado. He said no Negroes whose bonds have not been set are now in jail. The number held, he claimed, is considerably less than the 34 named.

MRS. STEPHENSON OUT

It was announced Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, a war veteran, arrested after she was slapped by a white radio repairman, were released on bond to answer charges in the next county court term. The veteran is charged with pushing the white man, who fell through a plate glass window.

Ira H. Latimer, executive director of the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee; Samuel Neuberger and Rev. Joseph Moore, both representing the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, conferred with local officials yesterday. They said they wanted "to get to the bottom of things." Tue. 3-5-46

Negroes having business in the stricken community are still permitted to come and go only with passes issued by local police.

Defense Plans Drawn for Victims of Tennessee Riot

Journal & Guide
Norfolk, Va.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Plans for the legal defense of the 100 Negro citizens arrested and charged with offenses in connection with the Columbia, Tenn., riot of Feb. 26-28 are being perfected by attorneys of the NAACP headed by Z. Alexander Looby of this city, and Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga.

Meanwhile, the NAACP office in New York moved to mobilize nationwide support of the riot victims through the formation of a national committee of colored and white citizens which will publicize the case, raise money for the court fight, and press for the punishment of officials responsible for the shooting and vandalism and violation of civil rights in Columbia. Sat 3-30-46

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MRS. ROOSEVELT HEADS COMMITTEE

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Dr. Channing H. Tobias will serve as co-chairmen of a national committee, it was announced by Walter White who is in personal charge of the case for the NAACP.

"There are two aspects to this case," White said, "both of which are of the greatest importance. One is the adequate legal defense of those who have been arrested and charged with crime. This is the first consideration. These persons, terrorized by a mob and the threat of a lynching, merely retired to their section of Columbia to avoid any trouble.

"Their district was invaded, their homes and businesses were ransacked and wrecked, and scores of them were threatened and beaten at the point of machine guns at the hands of raiding state troopers.

"It is of the very first importance that these innocent people be freed and that nothing take precedence over securing their liberty on these fantastic charges.

"The second important feature of this case is the arousing of public opinion through mass meetings and leaflets and protests to bring the guilty parties to justice and to prevent the occurrence at Columbia from becoming the pattern to be used by other communities throughout the nation.

"We expect, through the national committee now being formed, through the 1,100 branches of the NAACP, and through cooperation with other organizations, to carry out this important task, but without forgetting that the main issue to the colored people in Columbia is that those who have been arrested shall be free."

White said that a series of mass meetings is being arranged in 15 key cities, with smaller gatherings scattered in a score of other cities where the case will be publicized by speakers from the NAACP national office and others.

The case was spread before delegates to a 5-state NAACP regional conference in Tulsa, Okla., March 23, by Miss Ella J. Baker, director of branches and Miss Lucille Black, of the NAACP New York office.

FBI TO INVESTIGATE

White and Thurgood Marshall, chief NAACP counsel, who will supervise the entire defense, conferred March 18 with Attorney General Tom Clark in Washington and secured a promise from him that an exhaustive investigation would be made by the FBI.

Mr. Looby, who is a member of the NAACP national legal committee with offices here, emphasized that the NAACP will be used for their legal defense and for publicizing the case.

Contributions to the defense fund should be sent to the NAACP, 20 West 40th street, New York 18, N. Y. Checks can be made payable to NAACP, or to Mary White Ovington, Treas.

What Was Behind Tennessee Riot

Afro American
Baltimore, Md

By NAT WILLIAMS

COLUMBIA — Investigation of the incident which reportedly fomented the [illegible] riot in this hilly [illegible] seat town [illegible] that the whites [illegible] the tension by their actions toward a war veteran and his mother.

The trouble started at noon Monday, when Mrs. Gladys Stevenson 37, and her son, James C. Stevenson Jr., 19, who served three years overseas with the U.S. Navy, went to the Castner-Knott Electric Shop on the main street to pick up a radio sent there by Mrs. Stevenson for repairs.

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Mrs. Stevenson said that she had sent the radio to the shop over a month ago merely for a new set of tubes but had been unable to get it because the repair men (white) wanted to make other repairs.

Employer Intervenes

Finally, Mrs. Stevenson revealed the situation to her employer, Mrs. Evelyn Syles, white, who advised her to go after the radio. In addition, Mrs. Syles telephoned the manager of the shop and was told that the radio had been sold.

However, he promised to restore the instrument if Mrs. Stevenson would pay the sum of $13.75.

Prepared to pay the money, the mother with her son went to the shop, where two white repair men tried to persuade her to allow them to repair the radio as they wished.

Followed to Street

Remarking that her radio had been ruined and that she would try to get it repaired elsewhere, she refused and started to leave the second floor of the establishment. Sat 3-9-46

Although a white man had entered with a complaint about a radio he had left there, the two repair men, followed the couple to the front of the shop.

Son Retaliates

Upon reaching the street, Mrs. Stevenson said, the two men, one of whom was William Fleming, 28, reputedly anti-colored, struck her son who returned the blow, knocking Fleming through the plateglass window of the shop.

Fleming was cut by falling glass, but the other continued to attack young Stevenson, declared his mother, who said that she pleaded with the two whites to leave him alone.

Beaten Herself

Then, she revealed, a blond white man ran across the street from the front of the county courthouse and jumped on her, knocking her down and stamping on her with his feet.

(Mrs. Stevenson was in bed Wednesday recovering from bruises about the head and face.)

Succeeding in getting away from her assailant, she ran to the nearby Stevenson (white) drug store, where she asked a relative of her employer to stop the white men from "killing my son."

When she and the would-be rescuer went back on the street, however, she and her son were placed under arrest by Columbia policemen, one of whom, she said, beat her repeatedly about the head and body and spoke to her abusively.

Held in jail from noon until 5:30 p.m. Monday, the two were finally released on bail of $3,500 raised by Mrs. Stevenson's mother, Mrs. Hannah Pepper, long-time resident of the city, and local colored businessmen. They are expected to face trial later this month.

After news of their release became known, rumors spread that a white mob was planning to lynch the couple. The white man in the affair were not arrested.

Columbia Riot Inquiry Sought

P.M. New York, N.Y.
Thur. 3-14-46

Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, Mar. 14.—Attorney General Tom Clark has picked up a hot potato—a demand for an investigation of the violence against Negroes in Columbia, Tenn., Feb. 25, when peace officers clearly violated the civil rights of American citizens.

A delegation, representing 56 national organizations, civic, fraternal and labor, waited on Clark late yesterday after an emergency meeting called by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare and other influential groups. An investigation was promised.

The Conference adopted a resolution which calls for prosecution of those who were responsible for the violence under the Federal civil rights statute; a protest to Gov. Jim McCord of Tennessee and demand for a fair trial of the accused; support from all organizations, particularly organized labor, for mass meetings and the naming of a coordinating committee to blueprint an overall campaign to assist the accused. Thur. 3-14-46

The resolution said in part:

"The wanton police raid upon and destruction of the business section of the Negro community . . . the mass arrests and conspiracy to railroad to prison terms the victims of this violence, and the murder in the Columbia jail of two of the defendants demonstrate a growing pattern by State and local police, under the cloak of law, to deprive citizens of their fundamental constitutional rights.

"The police and judicial terror against labor and minorities was given dramatic expression at Columbia. There the Negro community was threatened with violence at the hands of a white lynch mob, and only a spontaneous determination by the Negroes to defend themselves caused the mob to be frustrated."

Troopers

Journal & Guide

Storm Defenders

Norfolk, Va.

(Continued from page 1)

and her son to assault Fleming. Later, the mother and son were placed under arrest.

COLORED CITIZENS REBEL

The resentment of colored citizens of the town burst its bounds. In the shooting that followed, seven were injured including four officers.

To curb the clash, Gov. Jim McCord ordered four companies of the Tennessee State Guard here. In addition, 45 State highway patrolmen were sent to the scene. They were under the command of the State Safety Commissioner, Lynn Bomar.

Armed white citizens thronged the public square and other sections of the city.

RIOT PREPARATION

Officials set up riot guns in the public square. The colored section known as "Mink Slide" was encircled by State Guardsmen and highway patrolmen. Several persons were arrested on charges of carrying weapons, and according to reports, these persons were predominantly Negroes. Sat 3-2-46

The injured officers in King's Daughters' Hospital, according to authentic sources, are: Police Chief J. W. Griffin, Patrolmen Sam Richardson, Vernon Stofel, and Will Wilsford. The latter was believed to be critically injured.

The men were fired on when they sought to repluse infuriated colored citizens early in the night.

Fleming, one of the party who precipitated trouble, is also in the hospital, but his injuries, it is said, are of a minor nature.

KKK BORN IN TENN.

Tennessee is historically an American battleground in the fight between freedom and oppression. Near Columbia, barely 25 miles away, at Pulaski the infamous Ku Klux Klan was born in 1865 as what was described as a "youthful prank."

Next to Virginia, the state was the chief battle scene of the Civil War. 454 engagements were fought there including Gen. Grant's victory at Shiloh in April of 1862. All told, the state furnished 115,000 soldiers for the Confederate Army, and 31,000 for the Union Army.

However, sentiment was strongly pro-Union despite the Act of Secession in 1861, engineered by state leaders.

Only 4 White Men Among 31 Indicted In Columbia Riots

P.M. N.Y.
Sun 3-24-46

The county grand jury at Columbia, Tenn., has returned 11 indictments charging 31 Negroes and four white men with offenses ranging from attempted murder to carrying a dangerous weapon in connection with last month's riots, in which 12 persons were wounded.

A total of 28 Negroes, 16 of whom are under bond and 12 of whom were not named, were charged with attempted murder in the first degree, and three others were charged with "attempt to commit a felony." The names of two of the four white men were not disclosed because they have not been arrested.

Meanwhile, Attorney General Tom C. Clark asked for a Federal grand jury into the Columbia riots, wiring U. S. Attorney Horace Frierson at Columbia that he was "deeply concerned" over possible violations of civil rights and other laws. He directed Frierson to ask for a grand jury at "the earliest possible time."

The Columbia disturbances reportedly started with a quarrel between a white radio repair man and a Negro woman and her son over a repair bill. The altercation touched off the spark of an already tense race situation.

Veteran Businessman, Julius Blair, 76, Proves Columbians Tried to Avert Riot

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

Sat. 10-5-46

City's Leader Tells How He Attempted to Get Authorities to Guarantee Mink Slide Protection

By VINCENT TUBBS
AFRO Staff Correspondent

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—In a moving narrative of his own clim from bootblack to the county's wealthiest colored citizen, Julius Blair, 76-year-old defendant, related in court here Friday how he had done everything in his power to avoid the racial disturbance in Columbia last February.

Recalling that twice in his lifetime he has known the long-term ill feeling between the races resultant of lynchings, Mr. Blair positively denied instigating resistance to a white mob he saw February 25.

He contends instead that he posted bond for Mrs. Gladys Stevenson and her son, James, with the idea of getting them out of town so that the white mob would calm down.

Informed by Grandmother

During an hour and thirty-five minutes of direct examination and fifty minutes of cross-examination, the grey-haired Columbian graphically related events leading up to and following the shooting of Officer Will Willsford, white, for which he and 24 others are under indictment.

He first heard about the probabilities of mob violence on the afternoon of Feb. 25, he said, from Mrs. Hannah Peppers, grandmother of the youth who reportedly fought a white radio repairman for pushing his mother.

Mrs. Peppers, he explained, came to the Blair establishment in Mink Slide and advised him that a mob was forming to lynch the Stevensons who were then in jail.

Arranged Steep Bond

His first act, Mr. Blair testified, was to contact Magistrate C. H. Denton to arrange bail, but he was advised not to take the youth out of jail because of the magistrate's profession of fear of mob violence.

"We are not going to have any more social lynchings in Columbia," Blair testified. He told the magistrate, adding, "We'll take care of these people, and there will be no need for trouble."

oBnd was set at $3,500, which he considered exorbitant for such a minor offense, but he, his son, Saul; James Morton and John Dudley posted the amount because he (Mr. Blair) had seen crowds of whites on the public square, some bearing arms, and his knowledge of prior lynchings led him to feel that the jail "was not safe" against the mob.

Safe Route Planned

Mrs. Stevenson was taken to her home in Happy Hollow, he asserted, but the youth was brought back to Mink Slide so that he would be immediately available for flight if the threat of mob action grew.

Such did occur, Mr. Blair declared, and he told his son, Saul, to take the boy to Nashville, plotting a route for a car to take so as to avoid the mob.

James Bellanfant, Tom Neely and eGorge Frierson accompanied Saul Blair on the trip to Nashville, it was revealed, and the move, Mr. Blair pointed out, was one that might have cost him the $3,500 bail but he felt that avoiding trouble would be worth the loss.

Wanted Mob Dispersed

Having seen a small group of whites gathered on the Square grow to mob proportions on two trips to town during the atfernoon, Mr. Blair then called the office of Sheriff J. J. Underwood to advise him that the youth had been spirited out of town and the mob should be told this with the hope that it would disperse.

Mr. Blair then went to a civic meeting where a group of citizens were planning ways of raising, money to buy ground which they proposed to present to the county so that a new high school can be built.

Later, he testified, James Morton came to the house to get his wife and advised the assembly that a mob was gathering in town and they should go home.

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Money Left Behind Taken

Immediately, Mr. Blair said, he went to his business establishments in Mink Slide, ousted all patrons, closed up, padlocked the door and went home.

This was done in such a frenzy, he ashstred ....ly gkyaytyaltlaa he asserted, that the day's receipts, estimated at $80 to $100, were not removed from cash registers, which had been rifled when he was permitted to re-enter the place several days later.

Destruction Described

Under direct examination by Maurice Weaver, by assistant defense counsel, Mr. Blair then related in a near tearful voice how his drugstore and pool hall were demolished during a raid by State Highway patrolmen early on Feb. 26.

State prosecutors objected to this part of his testimony as having no bearing on the law suit which charges conspiracy to murder Officer Willsford on the night before and was sustained in its objection by Judge Joe Ingram.

Mr. Blair went on to tell, however, what he meant when telling Squire Denton he did not wish to see another "social lynching."

His reference was to the Cordie Cheek lynching in 1933, where Columbia whites cut up and preserved as souvenirs pieces of the rope with which the youth was hanged from the courthouse window.

No Desire for Strife

In answer to a question about his personal feelings toward whites and whether or not he was inclined to instigate violence against them, Mr. Blair told the inspiring tale of his climb from bootblack to wealth estimated at nearly $100,000.

"All I wanted was peace," he declared. "All my life's work is in Mink Slide and after spending all my life to establish something, I certainly wouldn't want to see it all torn down as I felt might happen if there was a riot."

Held Incommunicado

He was arrested, Mr. Blair asserted, after he had been seen moving about town with NAACP Investigator Weaver and was held incommunicado until he bribed a colored boy around the jail to take word of his incarceration to his lawyer, a Mr. Hopkins.

He was repeatedly called a "grey-haired old 's.o.b.'" by various patrolmen and officers who accosted him at various times before his arrest.

Efforts to contact the mayor, senator and sheriff while in jail, were foiled until Mr. Hopkins appeared and engaged in heated argument with jail officials about his release, he revealed.

Warning of Danger

Mr. Blair recalled that Squire Denton avised against his leaving the jail with the assertion, "if you knew what I know, you wouldn't want to come out—I hate to see a good man killed."

He testified further that he remained in jail overnight on the plea of his son, Saul, before obtaining his freedom on bond posted by Mr. Hopkins.

In explanation of his posting bond for the Stevensons, he said he has been providing bond for Columbians for many years but never for thieves or drunkards whose infractions of the law he does not condone.

Saw Only Whites Armed

By no action or deed did he ever indicate any desire to harm anyone, Mr. Blair asserted, and, having known Willsford for 40 years, he bore no ill will against him and was sorry that he was hurt.

Under cross examination by Attorney General Paul Bumpus, Mr. Blair said he saw no one in Mink Slide bearing arms on the evening of Feb. 25 before he went home but that he had positively seen numerous whites with guns on the town square during the afternoon.

Unshaked in his testimony despite skillfull efforts by Bumpus to tie him up, Mr. Blair left the stand after his gruelling 2½ hour ordeal having presented some of the trial's most straight-forward and moving testimony.

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Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia)

Tennessee Prosecutor Seeks a Death Jury

The Worker New York, N.Y.

Sun. 4-7-46

By ROBERT MINOR

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—As the preparation of the frame-up trial of the 31 leaders of the Negro community proceeds the maneuvering over the question of an all-white jury looks more ugly, dirty and crooked.

About a week from now the principal defendants will make their first appearance in court. This will not be the trial. The first move against the frame-up is the argument of a plea in abatement, filed by the attorney of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, Maurice Weaver. This is a plea challenging the legality of the indictments because of the arbitrary exclusion of Negroes in the selection of the grand jury that indicted the Negro defendants.

Not in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Columbia has a grand jury for Maury County been formed otherwise than by the systematic exclusion of Negroes. This means that in a half century there has not been a lawful indictment and trial of a Negro in a State court.

Since the big struggle over the Scottsboro case, in which millions of people throughout the United States and many other countries participated in defence of Negroes' rights, the Supreme Court has held that systematic exclusion of Negroes from grand and petty juries renders the findings of such juries invalid as against Negroes. The violation of the rights of the Negroes is doubly flagrant in this case, in which a grand jury, selected on the second day of the armed conflict, and exclusively from among white partisans of the struggle, is little more than a continuation committee for the mob that tried to lynch the young Negro veteran, James Stephenson, and his mother. The grand jury was practically a belligerent in the conflict and the process of "investigation" for its labors included the shooting of three Negroes in jail by the police, while being "questioned" for this grad jury.

On top of the illegality of the actions of the grand jury, the prosecutor, Paul F. Bumpus, has the job of selecting a "Negro-convicting" trial jury, which will inevitably have the same illegality. Almost surely it will be made all-white by the same illegal exclusion of Negroes. Yet it must be done by such careful manipulation behind the scenes as will make possible some solemn oaths in court that Negroes were on the jury panel. The panel has to be so constructed that one or more Negroes will appear on it and yet can be ruled out of the jury itself as "unqualified." It will not be an easy job of rigging. Sun. 4-7-46

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus is handling the job of convicting these Negroes in the spirit of the code of the Klan—the Negroes who raise their hands to resist the actions of white-supremacy gangsters must never be allowed to go free; vengeance must be unfailing.

The whole town is watching the ugly, dirty job, and a large half of the town is saying that it is crooked. This half is only partly composed of Negroes, and partly composed of white trade unionists. The local organization of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, a little more than half of whose members are colored, is the most firm in this position.

The frame-up cannot be carried through without making the unlawful all-white trial more or less acceptable to the community.

RENEGADE

Here is where renegades come in.

P. L. Harden, describing himself as a Negro lawyer of Jackson, Tenn., has publicly offered his sympathy to the prosecutor in a letter, which Bumpus gratefully receives and publishes. Harden heads an organization that he calls **"the Southern Association for the Improvement of Colored Citizens,"** evidently a play on the name of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People in the hope of borrowing some of the honorable reputation the NAACP has earned by many years of courageous struggle.

Harden's line of talk is a revelation of one aspect of the old frame-up system. He wants "outsiders" to keep out of the matter, and "let Tennessee" handle it. This is the very soul of the frame-up—to railroad the victims to prison before the great world-wide public is fully aware. As Harden puts it, **"the quicker this matter is settled and forgotten the better off we all will be."** Sun. 4-7-46

These words are strangely identical with the very first slogan raised by cowardly renegades in the Scottsboro case. Here in Columbia the words mean—abandon the heroic men and the brave mother of Jimmy Stephenson to the brutal designs of the Klan.

Other Cases Set in Columbia Riot

Defender

10-5-46 ( ) Sat

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — The momentous decision freeing 23 of 25 defendants of participation in the February riot during which four policemen were wounded does not by far end the Mink Slide incident.

At least a dozen other cases are pending and the 23 freed defendants face other charges in Maury County district court, NAACP defense counsel announced last week.

First on the regular session of Circuit Court, they revealed, will be the trial of William A. Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy who are charged with an attempt to commit murder in the first degree upon an officer on Feb. 25.

Case Set for Nov. 11

Judge Ingram has set the case for Nov. 11.

Also pending in the Maury Court are the cases of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James. who are charged with assault with intent to murder growing out of the street fight that sparked the fracas.

Other cases include an additional indictment against James Morton, mortician, freed Friday of charges of being an accessory before the fact, who now faces a hearing on charges of being an accessory after the fact. Defender

Face Weapon Charges

James Blackwell, Saul Blair and at least a dozen other defendants acquitted in Lawrenceburg must still face charges of carrying concealed weapons or illegal possession of deadly weapons.

Attorneys Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville; Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga, and Leon A. Ransom, Washington, will again represent the defendants. Chicago, Ill.

Justice Victory

"With the acquittal of 23 of the 25 men on trial for attempted murder in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., American justice has triumphed over the Klan," Walter White, NAACP executive declared.

"We are grateful to the individuals and organizations who worked with the National Committee for Justice in Tennessee and to members of the press whose editorial support helped make this verdict possible," he said. Sat. 10-5-46

Lauds Attorneys

Mr. White paid high tribute to the three defense lawyers who "under the most trying conditions fought courageously to ensure the defendants a fair trial."

"In our jubilation, however, let us not forget that there are still seven to be tried and the 23 just acquitted have to face another trial on other indictments," he pointed out.

Funds Needed

"A great victory has been won, but the fight is not over. Funds are still needed to continue the battle for freedom for the seven innocent men facing sentence for crimes of which they are innocent," Mr. White added.

"No justice-loving citizen will hesitate to give this fight his fullest spiritual and financial support," he concluded.

Tenn. Riot Blamed On Working Setup; Two Fatally Shot

The Informer Houston, Texas

Sat 3-9-46

By NAT D. WILLIAMS

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — (ANP) — As this town of 12,000 continued tense following the 16 hour race riot of last Tuesday and the slaying of two arrested Negroes Thursday in the Maury county jail, blame for the first major post war outbreak was placed by observers on working conditions at the nearby phosphate plants at Mt. Pleasant and determination of white supremacists to "keep the Negro in his place" along with opposition by returned tan GI's and militan colored citizens to go back to a grossly inferior status following a world conflict for democracy.

Meanwhile, the role of the state militia and highway patrolmen came in for heavy criticism following the shooting up of the main Negro business district, wholesale arrests of nearly 100 persons, only three of them white, search and seizure of Negro homes and weapons while whites were allowed to keep their guns and ammunition.

Victims of Thursday's shootings were William Gordon and James Johnson, pronounced dead upon their arrival at a Nashville hospital. According to Lynn Bomar, state safety commissioner, they were shot after one of them grabbed a rifle confiscated Tuesday and shot Deputy Sheriff R. T. Darnell in the arm. Sheriff J. J. Underwood asserted all seized weapons had been checked twice to make sure they were empty, and declared he did not know where Gordon and Johnson got the ammunition.

Although the riot was touched off by an incident involving a radio repair job, Atty. Gen Paul Bumpus said "trouble has been brewing for a long time because of the Negro white working conditions" at the Mensanta chemical plant at Mount Pleasant. There Negroes and whites have been working side by side on the same jobs, but the wage differential has caused resentment on the part of Negroes, with whites intent on keeping their pay superiority.

The trouble started at noon Monday when Mrs. Gladys Stevenson, 37, and her son, James C. Stevenson Jr., 19, a veteran of three years overseas duty with the U. S. Navy, went to the Castner-Knott Electric shop, on the main street of Columbia to pick up a radio which Mrs. Stevenson had sent there for repairs. Mrs. Stevenson said she had sent the radio to the shop more than a month ago.

She wanted a new set of tubes, but the radio repair men (white) wanted to make other repairs. Mrs. Stevenson, who works as a domestic to her employer, Mrs. Evelyn Styles, about the situation, and was advised to get the radio. Her employer called the manager of the concern, and he told her that the radio had been sold. However, he promised to restore the instrument if Mrs. Stevenson would pay the sum of $13.75.

Mrs. Stevenson and her son went to pay this amount and get the radio. She talked with two white repairmen. They tried to persuade her to allow them to repair the radio as they wished. She refused and remarked that her radio had been ruined and that she would try to get it repaired some other place. As she and her son started to leave the second floor of the establishment they met a white man who was also registering a complaint about the manner in which the men repaired radios.

Instead of heeding this man, the two repairmen followed the Negro couple to the first floor and the front of the shop. When they reached the street the two men, one of whom was William Fleming, 28, a reputed Negro-baiter, Mrs. Stevenson, said struck her son. The navy veteran returned the blow, knocking Fleming through the plate-glass window of the shop. Fleming was cut by falling glass. Meantime the other man continued to attack young Stevenson. His mother was pleading with the white man to leave her son alone. Sat 3-9-46

A blow white man, Mrs. Stevenson said, ran across the street from the front of the county courthouse and jumped on her. He knocked her down and began stamping on her with his feet. (Mrs. Stevenson was in bed Wednesday recovering from bruises about the head and face). She succeeded in getting away from her assailant and ran to the nearby Stevenson (white) drug store, where she asked a relative of her employer to stop the white men from "killing my son."

When she and the rescuer went back to the street they found that Columbia city police had arrived. The police placed Mrs. Stevenson and her son under arrest. Mrs. Stevenson said one of the officers beat her repeatedly about the head and body and spoke to her abusively. The mother and son were held in jail from noon until 5:30 p.m. Monday, when they were released on bail of $3500. The money was raised through Mrs. Stevenson's mother, Mrs. Hannah Pepper, long-time Co-

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umbia resident, who was assisted in raising the fund by local Negro business men.

When news that the Negro couple had been bailed out spread over the town, rumors spread that a white mob was planning to hunt young Stevenson and his mother down and lynch them. The white men in the affair had not been arrested.

Negro Columbians heard about the alleged mob. Word soon reached Sheriff J. J. Underwood of Maury county, that armed groups of Negroes had assembled in the east Eighth Street business district. Negro Columbians apparently remembered previous local lynch attempts, the latest of which was last year.

Columbia's mayor Eldridge Denham, restaurant operator, when interviewed said, "I have always been a friend to Negroes." He issued a proclamation calling on all citizens to maintain peace.

Rev. Z. A. Brown, pastor of Saint Paul AME church in Columbia, stated that the riot was regrettable, and joined Joseph Braden, veteran taxi-driver and Mrs. Rebecca Johnson, former Columbia school teacher and civic leader, in the opinion that the basic cause of the disturbance was the deep resentment of many young Negro servicemen to the attempts of certain element of white Columbians to treat Negroes with contempt and abuse.

Sat 3-9-46

Mrs. Stevenson and her son expect to be called for trial sometime in March. Meanwhile, the 12,000 Negro and white citizens of Columbia continue to live under an atmosphere of deep tension, with groups of white civilians, accentuated by the presence and activities of uniformed state guards, state highway patrolmen loitering groups of white civilians and grim faced Negroes going about rountine affairs.

The public schools, closed Tuesday, were reopened Wednesday, along with all the other local business closed down in this agricultural county-seat during the 16 hours of racial violence.

On the Scoreboard

The Worker **By Lester Rodney** New York, N.Y.

Sun. 11-10-46

THIS LETTER makes a socko sequel to last week's column on Lynn Bomar and All Americans. Bomar, for those who came in late, is the ex-Vanderbilt All American end who as a deputy cop boasted of his brutality toward unarmed Negroes in Columbia, Tennessee.

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Here is an interesting bit about your recent story on Lynn Bomar, ex-All-American:

Back in 1928, just prior to the opening of the regular collegiate football season, Vanderbilt U. was engaging in its final tune-up by playing an unofficial game with neighboring little Cumberland University. The substitute end of Cumberland had been getting a good roughing-up at the hands of the Vandy tackle. Late in the second quarter the Vandy tackle bounced the Cumberland end bruskly out of the play. He hit him so hard he bounced back so far that he was thrown between the Vandy passer and Bomar. The pass flew straight for Bomar but the end was able to successfully intercept it and speed 60 yards to a touchdown.

During the second half Cumberland played as if inspired. Although Vanderbilt chewed up the territory, they were never able to cross the last stripe. Cumberland won 6-0 and the game was quickly forgotten.

Vanderbilt went on to a very successful season losing only to peerless Tennessee. Cumberland went on to a very mediocre season winning only four games out of nine. Bomar wound up the season as an All-American end. The guy who stole the pass from him wound up as a substitute on the poor Cumberland team.

Years went by. Bomar went into politics and suddenly flared into national importance by his actions and statements dealing with the Columbia, Tenn., lynchings. The small-time sub end who had played opposite him went on in a quiet way to set up an enviable war record and only two weeks ago he once again stole the ball from the great Bomar.

Two weeks ago, homeless veterans in New York state went in to the State Capitol at Albany and sat there 24 hours until Gov. Dewey came to see them. The man who presided at the sessions of the Veterans' Senate of New York, who made national news headlines and top radio news and who insisted in the conference with Dewey that all housing in New York include a non-discriminatory clause, was S. Clinton Stern, the ex-Cumberland end who took the play from Bomar for one brief moment.

The question today is "who is All-American today and who is UN-American today?"

Jury Finally Selected to Try 25 Columbia, Tenn., Negroes

Daily Worker

New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond

Tues. 9-17-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 16.—Selection of a jury to try the 25 Columbia Negroes was completed this afternoon. Examination of veniremen continued, however, to select a 13th man, an alternate to take the place of any juryman who might take sick or die during the trial.

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Members of the jury are W. E. Staggs, 65, farmer; Wash King, 60, farmer and former Alabama coal miner; Sedal Davis, 30, carpenter; John Pigg, 73, retired farmer; J. R. Bradley, 29, chemical plant worker; A. J. Jordan, 64, farmer; Herbert Patterson, 50, country storekeeper; J. J. Cleveland, 58, farmer; Arthur Pollock, 58, farmer; Frank Kersteins, 62, carpenter; Howard Vantiford, 32, farmer, and Bill Wilburn, 31, saw mill operator. They are all white men.

Vantiford and Wilburn, the last two jurors to step into the box were qualified quickly by Judge Joe M. Ingram following a few brief questions.

Having exhausted its peremptory challenges, the defense was denied the right to quiz the veniremen. Challenges for cause by the defense in the cases of both veniremen were quickly overruled by the court.

FIVE FULL WEEKS

Five full weeks were consumed in examination of four jury panels. A total of 850 Lawrence County property owners had their names pulled out of the metal jury box since jury selection began on Aug. 13.

Eight admitted members of the Ku Klux Klan were qualified to sit as jurors by Judge Ingram. These were removed by peremptory challenges of the defense.

Defense lawyer Maurice Weaver moved quickly for a mistrial during today's session when Clarence Beasley, the fourth venireman questioned, spoke in a highly derogatory and inflamatory manner about the Negro race.

No women were on the four jury panels exhausted during the long weeks of examination. The laws of Tennessee do not permit women to qualify as jurors.

Eighteen Negroes, the first in the history of the county, were called as veniremen in the Columbia case. Sixteen were eliminated by state peremptory challenges. The others were removed for lack of property or other qualifications.

The twenty-five Columbia Negroes on trial are charged with attempting to murder white police officers on Feb. 25. The accused men, 10 of whom are war veterans were arrested and indicted after the Columbia Negro community clashed with a Maury County lynch mob.

IN QUIET DECAY

Defender Chicago, Ill

25 Negroes Stand Trial

Sat. 10-5-46

By ENOC P. WATERS
(Defender Staff Correspondent)

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—The 25 Negroes who were arrested and indicted after police had almost demolished the little business block of Mink Slide where many of them lived, owned property, or worked in Columbia are being tried in an atmosphere of quiet decay, unfriendly civility and judicial antagonism.

The high ceilinged courtroom with its squeaking chairs, wobbly tables and white spitoons is a cheerless place badly in need of renovation.

There's a puzzling immobility about the gallused and overalled jury that is arranged like a church choir directly in front of and below the high dais on which Judge Joe M. Ingram lolls, smokes cigars and occasionally nods.

Seldom Smile

Though attentive to testimony they seldom smile or react in any way to the drama in front of them. Most of them obviously enjoy the comfort of their squeaking swivel chairs that are distinctly novel to many of them.

One of them could easily be mistaken for Georgia's Gov.-Elect Eugene Talmadge.

Another, a youthful, sandy-haired chap, occasionally looks at the defendants and smiles.

The spectators who drop in sit for a while, spit on the floor and drift out are, for the most part, unshaven farmers with work-hardened hands and narrow lips.

Oddly there's no Jim Crow in the courtroom. and barely a day passes without several local Negroes coming in to see how things are going. They sit where they please.

One teen-age chap hasn't missed a day but always slips out before I can talk with him.

Air Corps Captain

Another daily visitor is a natty white Air Corps captain who follows the movements of every person within the rail and strains to hear every word spoken. I spoke to him Friday and he returned my greeting, then walked away.

That is what they all do here. Saturday, a day of great activity in the little town with all the farm folks from miles around in for shopping and recreation, I walked around the store-lined courthouse square.

I spoke to people indiscriminately. They could have ignored me but they didn't. They spoke, too. Some even smiled as they spoke. But none made an opening for further conversation.

If they have a reaction at all to the trial it is resentment—the selection of their town as a place to wash the dirty linen of Columbia. But I have been unaware of any hostility to the strange Negroes brought in town by the trial.

The best and the worst that can be said of these people is that they are civil.

It is a town of less than 5,000 persons, about 500 of whom are Negroes. It is the center for a county of more than 30,000 souls. It is the market, commercial, business, recreational and legal center for an area of small farms averaging about 125 acres each. It is laid out along familiar lines, two business streets that form a cross with the courthouse at the point of intersection. It is bone dry, not even beer being offered for sale. It has a self-righteous air of rigid Protestant respectability.

At the moment the people are more interested in the County Fair than in the legal sideshow, the biggest ever put on here.

There is here, as there must be everywhere, a small enlightened group.

Indifferent To Outcome

They share with their fellow townsmen a resentment to the trials being held here. They were at first as most the people here are now entirely indifferent as to the outcome of the legal proceedings.

But out of curiosity they attended several sessions of the court. They told a newspaper friend of mine that the court was so prejudiced that they are sympathetic with the defendants.

Lawrenceburg's weekly paper, the Democrat Union, is not as impartial as it is indifferent to the trial. With newspapermen here from all over the country it ran in its weekly edition this week only a half column story on the front page.

Run by Charley and Jim Crawford whose father was a bitter foe of the Ku Klux Klan, the paper, a local Negro told me, is not radical.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, I mean it ain't radical like that fellow Bilbo."

The Negroes living in town do odd jobs about the stores and other business places and domestic work, but for the most part they're farm and timber workers.

For a small town the courthouse square is a noisy place. Perhaps it's because the acoustics of the courtroom are bad and one has to strain to listen that one is conscious of the noises that drift in through the open windows.

For those who like small towns Lawrenceburg, I believe, would be a nice place to live if you were white.

'Old Gang' Challenged in Tenn. Town

The Worker New York, N.Y. Sun. 9-8-46

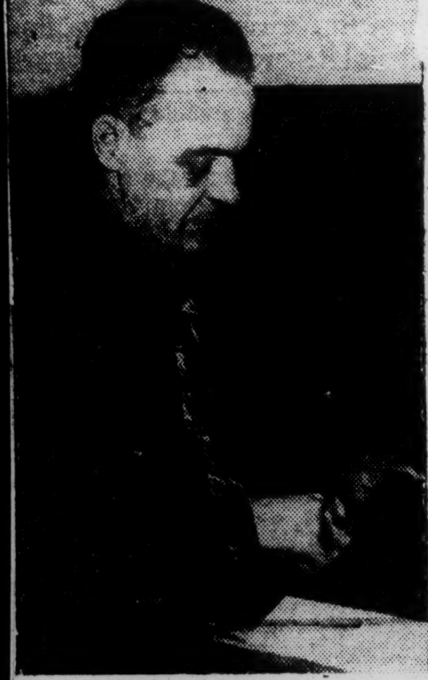
By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Residents of this erstwhile quiet rural community, which has been seething with controversy for three weeks over the current trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes, found themselves plunged into a noisy political battle last week.

A powerful war veterans political group, counted out by a narrow margin in the Aug. 1 Lawrence County elections, came before the same court trying the Negroes and charged "gross fraud and injustice" at the polls on the part of the county Democratic machine. Headed by W. O. Crowder, the veterans, recorded as polling four out of every five county votes, filed a petition with Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram and District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus demanding a special grand jury probe of alleged voting irregularities.

Ingram, allied with the county Democratic machine and under fire both in and out of his party organization for transferring the Columbia "race" trial here, turned down the veterans' application for a special grand jury. He said the fraud charges would have to be aired before the regular September grand jury.

But the veterans, constituted as the county Republican organization, pointed out that ballots, scrolls, absentee ballots and applications for ballots would be destroyed by their political opponents unless quick action were taken. Public demand against delay was followed by the reluctant issuance by Ingram of an injunction against removal or destruction of the ballots and records.



HARRY RAYMOND

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THE VETERANS political group here, while carrying the Republican label, is more an anti-Crump machine battling corrupt politics on a local scale than a GOP organization in the sense of national policy.

The Lawrence County Veterans Ticket has announced alliance with the Athens, Tenn., veterans who took up arms last month to get an honest election count. The count of votes for Lawrence County Sheriff, challenged by the vets, was: McAfee, Democrat, 5,880; Lindsay, Veterans-Republican, 4,679. Out of seven posts the official count gave the veterans two, the county judgeship, which went to John G. Crews, and superintendent of roads, which went to Curtis Knott. But the veterans claim all seven offices, including trustee, registrar, county clerk and circuit clerk.

Many absentee ballots, the veterans' petition charges, were delivered to election officials by mail then opened and marked for opposing candidates.

Other absentee ballots, never applied for by voters, were cast illegally by the opposition, the veterans further charged. Two of the veteran group candidates alleged to have been fraudulently counted out were Mrs. A. M. Oaks, widow of a soldier killed in action and candidate for trustee. and Mrs. Robert Brink, wife of a soldier and candidate for county clerk. They are the first women ever to run for office in Lawrence County.

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BUT A NEW factor has entered Lawrenceburg politics. It is the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes. The accused men were arrested and charged with attempt to commit murder when the Columbia Negro community clashed with a lynch mob Feb. 25.

Local resentment against action of Judge Ingram and District Attorney Bumpus for transferring the trial here, overruling motions by attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People to try the case in Nashville, is mounting and cuts across, party lines.

Sun. 9-8-46

Word has spread far and wide in Lawrence County that Ingram and Bumpus, Democrats, had hoped to make political capital out of the case. It is charged the two and assistant district attorney William Harwell, a local man, and Hugh Shelton, also assisting in the prosecution, expected to increase their popularity and political stature by appearing in court here as staunch defenders of "white supremacy," putting Negroes in their "place."

But the Ingram-Bumpus plan kicked back at the outset. It has been kicking back harder ever since.

White residents have not rallied in support of the accused Negroes "White supremacy" continues to dominate social thinking and Jimcrow rules the roost. But Judge Ingram and District Attorney Bumpus have seen their popularity sink to near zero during their three weeks battle for an all-white "hanging" jury to try the Negroes.

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"ANYTHING is likely to happen here from the way folks are talking," a leading white citizen told me following a recent court session.

The Lawrenceburg man was discussing Judge Ingram's action that day of sending Brack Hudson, white auto mechanic and popular second baseman on the local ball team, to jail for ten days for contempt of court.

Hudson was the third white man jailed by Ingram and fined $50 for attempting to dodge jury duty in the Columbia case.

Ingram's refusal to call a special grand jury in the vote fraud case, these jailings and Ingram's role in transferring the Columbia case to the local court has got this town in an uproar.

It is true most of the anger is directed at present against Ingram and Bumpus. Both Democrats and Republicans appear to be united in the aim of retiring the two from public office.

But there is a serious danger lurking in the situation. It is failure of any political group here to come directly to the defense of the framed-up Negroes. And there are numerous influential persons, some of whom have appeared as prospective jurors, openly advocating mob violence against Negroes. Many of the foes of Ingram and Bumpus are even greater foes of black men.

So it would be a mistake to read too much progress in the local political struggle.

THE COLUMBIA GRAND JURY WHITEWASH

The Defender Chicago, Ill. Sat. 6-29-46

While a whitewash of the Columbia riot case by the Federal Grand Jury convening in Nashville was to be expected, it does highlight how impossible it is for Negroes to receive anything approaching justice from Dixie's law machinery.

Not only did the Grand Jury in its report absolve Maury County and state enforcement agents from criminal responsibility, it commended them for "impartial action" in their treatment of Negroes and whites alike.

Federal Judge. Elmer Davies—a southerner—a reported Ku Kluxer—who ordered the investigation only after United States Atty.-Gen. Tom Clarke had insisted upon it, even went further than the report, charging that all those who disagreed with the findings were either communists or agitators who were interested in stirring up trouble between the races.

Yet irrefutable facts which even the Grand Jury could not gloss over, show that two Negroes were killed AFTER THEY WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

Thus we have the spectacle of southern justice—of a cracker judge—of small town Dixie jurors born and bred in an environment of race hate— sitting in solemn session with only one purpose in mind—of finding a way to absolve their comrades of like training and environment from legal responsibility for killing a few "niggers" and destroying their property. Then they cried to high heaven that the world press misrepresented the facts.

Now the stage is set for the next step of the Columbia show. Down in that little backward burg, the State of Tennessee is already in the process of legally lynching Negro citizens involved in the riot case. With a clean bill of health from the Federal Grand Jury this will be relatively easy, for there is now no legal obstacle to stop the Maury County jury, composed as it is of the same righteous citizens who may have been in the lynch mob on the night of Feb. 25.

Thus Dixie law continues to grind out its peculiar brand of justice—a brand of justice which stinks with the rotten odor of an American brand of Naziism.

It is interesting to observe some of the so-called liberal southern groups supporting the Grand Jury whitewash. There is the Southern Regional Council composed of both whites and Negroes.

Enoch Waters, brilliant Defender correspondent, now touring the South, writes of this group, "From our observation the Council is made up of some status quo-ers and some long-rejected Negro leaders who have lagged so far behind the masses they claim to represent to be more 'white' than 'Negro' in their thinking.

"We do not know of any member of the Council who will openly advocate the abolition of legal segregation in the South . . . The limit of the liberalism of the white members of the Council is advocacy of paving of streets in the Negro section of town."

Then there is John Temple Graves, Birmingham columnist who charges that there are those who would make another Scottsboro case of Columbia. Of course, it is another Scottsboro case; if anything, worse.

Regardless of Graves and little southern Negro puppets, the world is judging the South and America, too. It shakes its head and wonders at a great nation which is too impotent to do anything about its race problem. It shudders and shrinks from a culture which sacrifices Christianity, rules of brotherhood—yes, every decent moral principle—to the God of color.

These little blacks of Mink Slide may be sacrificed on the altar of hate, but in the hoary annals of history their case will stand out just as Scottsboro or the Dred Scott decision—as shocking evidence that the American color system must change.

16-Hour Riot Blamed On Working Conditions And 'White Supremacy'

Louisiana Weekly
New Orleans, La.

By Nat D. Williams

(By The Associated Negro Press)

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Columbia, Tenn., March 6.—As this town of 12,000 continued tense following the 16-hour race riot of last Tuesday and the slaying of two arrested Negroes on Thursday in the Maury County jail, blame for the first major post-war outbreak was placed by observers on working conditions at the nearby phosphate plants at Mt. Pleasant and determination of white supremacists to "keep the Negro in his place," along with opposition by returned GIs and militant colored citizens to go back to a grossly inferior status following a world conflict for democracy. Sat 3-9-46

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The trouble started at noon Monday when Mrs. Gladys Stevenson, 37, and her son, James C. Stevenson Jr., 19, a veteran of three years' overseas duty with the U. S. Navy, went to the Castner-Knott Electric Shop, on the main street of Columbia, to pick up a radio which Mrs. Stevenson had sent there for repairs. Mrs. Stevenson said she had sent the radio to the repair shop more than a month ago. She wanted a new set of tubes, but the radio repair men (white) wanted to make other repairs. Mrs. Stevenson, who works as a domestic, told her employer, Mrs. Evelyn Syles, about the situation and was advised to get the radio. Her employer called the manager of the concern and he told her that the radio had been sold. However, he promised to restore the instrument if Mrs. Stevenson would pay the sum of $13.75. Sat 3-9-46

Mrs. Stevenson and her son went to pay this amount and get the radio. She talked with two white repairmen. They tried to persuade her to allow them to repair the radio as they wished. She refused, and remarked that her radio had been ruined and that she would try to get it repaired some other place. As she and her son started to leave the second floor of the establishment they met a white man who was also registering a complaint about the manner in which the men repaired radios. Instead of heeding this man, the two repairmen followed the Negro couple to the first floor and the front of the shop. When they reached the street the two men, one of whom was William Fleming, 28, a reputed Negro baiter, Mrs. Stevenson said, struck her son. The navy veteran returned the blow, knocking Fleming through the plate-glass window of the shop. Fleming was cut by falling glass. Meantime the other man continued to attack young Stevenson. His mother was pleading with the white men to leave her son alone.

A blonde white man, Mrs. Stevenson said, ran across the street from the front of the county court house and jumped on her. He knocked her down and began stamping on her with his feet. (Mrs. Stevenson was in bed Wednesday recovering from the bruises about the head and face.) She succeeded in getting away from her assailant and ran to the nearby Stevenson (white) drug store where she asked a relative of her employer to stop the white men from "killing my son." When she and the rescuer went back on the street they found that Columbia city police had arrived. The police placed Mrs. Stevenson and her son under arrest. Mrs. Stevenson said one of the officers beat her repeatedly about the head and body and spoke to her abusively. The mother and son were held in jail from noon until 5:30 p. m. Monday, when they were released on bail of $3,500. The money was raised through Mrs. Stevenson's mother, Mrs. Hannah Pepper, longtime Columbia resident, who was assisted in raising the fund by local Negro business men.

When news that the Negro couple had been bailed out spread over the town, rumors spread that a white mob was planning to hunt young Stevenson and his mother down and lynch them. The white men in the affair had not been arrested.

Negro Columbians heard about the alleged mob. Word soon reached Sheriff J. J. Underwood of Maury County that armed groups of Negroes had assembled in the East Eighth Street business district. Negro Columbians apparently remembered previous local lynch attempts, the latest of which was last year.

Sheriff Underwood, in giving his account of the affair, said: "I went to the street and saw from 40 to 50 Negroes standing around with shotguns and rifles in their hands. Since there is no law about carrying such weapons during the hunting season, I merely told them to disperse and go home. Several of them started to get impudent with me, but others in the group told them to 'shut up.' I ordered them to disband and go home. Sat 3-9-46

"Then I went to the public square, where I saw a group of around 40 or 50 white men, who had no guns visible. I talked to them and told them to disperse and go home. Some of the Negroes and some of the white men had been drinking. I immediately arrested three of the white men who had been drinking. I later arrested two Negroes who were driving a car in the city and had high-powered rifles with them. Then I heard shooting on Eighth Street. This was around 8:30 p. m. I learned that four officers had been shot."

The wounded officers were Will Wilsford, 60, shot critically by buckshot in the head, mouth and chest; Bernard Stofel, Sam Richardson and Chief J. W. Griffin.

The shooting on Eighth Street led the sheriff to request aid of the Tennessee Highway Patrolmen, and later a call to Governor James McCord to send in state guard units. The additional helpers arrived to find Negroes barricaded in their places of business on Eighth Street. Sheriff Underwood, who is politically popul with Negroes, said he and the patrolmen went Tuesday morning to the Negro business district, knocked on doors and requested the occupants of buildings to come out. He said they were answered by shots. This led to the shooting up of the Negro business district.

A curfew was announced. Groups of three or more persons were prohibited. A search of the homes of all the 3,000 Negro residents of Columbia was started. Some 400 varied types of firearms and other weapons were collected. Negroes suspected of participation in the disturbance were placed under arrest. Among those arrested were A. J. Morton, prominent undertaker; Julius Blair Jr. and Julius Blair Sr. Morton was one of the 12 Negroes arrested when patrolmen entered his home, adjoining the mortuary, shortly before daybreak Tuesday.

The men were reported as having offered no resistance but that patrolmen were fired upon from a dance hall, the Twilight Inn, across the street. The fire was answered by blasts from tommy guns, wielded by patrolmen. The 12 men were charged with assault with intent to commit murder. Four shotguns, two small caliber rifles and a pistol were found in their possession along with several opened bottles of whisky, it was reported. Sat 3-9-46

Columbia's mayor, Eldridge Denham, restaurant operator, when interviewed, said: "I have always been a friend to Negroes." He issued a proclamation calling on all citizens to maintain peace.

Rev. Z. A. Brown, pastor of St. Paul AME Church in Columbia, stated that the riot was regrettable, and joined Joseph Bradon, veteran taxi driver, and Mrs. Rebecca Johnson, former Columbia school teacher and civic leader, in the opinion that the basic cause of the disturbance was the deep resentment of many young returned Negro service men to the attempts of certain elements of white Columbians to treat Negroes with contempt and abuse.

Mrs. Stevenson and her son expect to be called for trial some time in March. Meanwhile, the 12,000 Negro and white citizens of Columbia continue to live under an atmosphere of deep tension, with groups of white civilians, accentuating by the presence and activities of uniformed state guards, state highway patrolmen, loitering groups of white civilians and grim-faced Negroes going about routine affairs.

Tenn. Judge Halts Lawyers' Jury Quiz, Takes Over Role

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.
Sat. 9-7-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — NAACP lawyers lost another legal round here, Aug. 28, in a desperate fight against Tennessee's "steamroller" justice, which seems set to pick a "hanging jury" of "white supremacy" proponents to convict the 25 defendants from Columbia, charged with attempted murder in the February racial disturbances.

Hereafter, Judge Joe M. Ingram ruled, he will address all questions on "feelings of prejudice" to prospective jurors from the bench.

The defense must submit all questions on race to him in writing, well in advance of the day's questioning, and he will conduct the future examination of veniremen on that point.

Rulnig Contested

The jurist handed down this extraordinary ruling on the ground that defense attorneys were using more time than necessary, and were "going too far afield."

Z. A. Looby, Leon A. Ransom and Maurice Weaver contested the ruling vigorously, pointing out that it makes it impossible for the defense to determine fairly what the true feelings of prospective jurors may be on race prejudice and the legal rights of colored citizens.

In addition to the un-democratic ruling, Judge Ingram fined one man $50 for contempt of court when he stated he would not be able to serve on the jury because of his prejudice against colored people.

Mistrial Asked

Attorneys Looby and Weaver immediately made motions for a mistrial and for a change of venue, on the grounds that the ruling would prevent the defense from getting prospective jurors to admit prejudice and, therefore, they would not get honest answers on this all-important question.

Over two weeks of questioning have produced only five jurors even faintly acceptable, and the defense lawyers have used up 39 of the 200 peremptory challenges they are allowed in blocking the choice of biased veniremen.

There are 120 left on the present venire to be questioned. Of the 190 questioned so far, 75 to 80 have expressed prejudice against colored people.

Error Cited

Mr. Ransom also charged that Judge Ingram had committed "a grievous error" in ordering that Clarence Brown, a defendant, forfeit his $5,000 bond for failure to appear in court on Aug. 22.

Although ill and supported by a physician's certificate, the judge ordered Brown brought into court from his sickbed and raised his bond to $10,000. Brown was kept in jail until the bond was raised.

The judge refused to permit acceptance of a bond from two other defendants, James Morton and Julius Blair. U. S. War Bonds were also refused as security. Five thousand dollars in cash, was raised locally, however, and the NAACP contributed another $5,000 for Brown's release.

Feud Non-Racial?

The February racial disturbances in Columbia were "not a race riot" acording to Prosecutor Paul F. Bumpus.

Protesting against constant use of this phrase by the defense, Bumpus declared he would introduce proof that "will develop it was not a race riot, but something over and above a race riot."

As the third week of examination of prospective jurors ended, one juror was chosen from 20 interviewed. He was John Pigg, 73-year-old retired farmer, the fourth to be chosen.

Defense Counsel For 25 Negroes Gagged By Judge

Defender Chicago, Ill.

Sat. 10-5-46

BULLETIN

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—In a last-minute report, Dr. Leon Ransom, defense counsel chief, announced Monday morning that the defense expects to complete its case by Tuesday.

By ENOC P. WATERS JR.
(Defender Staff Correspondent)

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Two police raids on Mink Slide, Columbia ghetto settlement, Thursday, and a gag imposed on one of three NAACP attorneys by cigar smoking Judge Joe Ingram in court here the same night, marked the opening of the defense Friday for 25 Negroes charged with shooting four Columbia policemen in the February riot.

The case has smelled of apparent determination to railroad the defendants. Testimony of the initial Columbia attack upon Mrs. Gladys Stevenson, a widow, and her 19 year old navy veteran son, James, was not admitted by the court. Nor was the account of a mob forming to remove them from the jail where they were lodged after the widow was beaten admitted. The FBI has refused to release pictures agents took during the riot. The photos which show whites looting Negro owned stores were shown a grand jury, in March.

Lawyers Clash

By late Saturday, 48th day of the trial, 12 persons, including three defendants had been heard for the defense. Testimony was interrupted by frequent clashes between the two batteries of lawyers. Proceedings ended Saturday on a bitter note, when defense counsel Z. Alexander Looby upbraided State Atty. Gen. Paul Bumpus, chief prosecutor for referring to several defense witnesses as "nigger women." The heated exchange was ordered stricken from the record.

The state closed its case Thursday, after using 28 witnesses, 12 of them Negro. It sought to prove that the shooting of four policemen was an intentional act growing out of a conspiracy headed by leaders of the Negro community. Several state's witnesses were teen agers spirited from Columbia's Hill high school without the knowledge or consent of their parents.

The infamous Columbia pogrom began in Mink Slide, Feb. 25, following the wounding of four officers, who were among the flying squads, looting shops and beating helpless Negroes. During the reign of terror that followed, state and local police, along with state guardsmen, and civilians looted shops, forced entrance into homes, and intimidated men, women and children. They jailed more than 100 Negroes, and killed two while they were in custody.

Though police who conducted raids on three Columbia buildings, Thursday, said they were looking for whiskey, local residents called it an attempt to intimidate Negroes who might be called up to support defense witnesses.

At the same time, Judge Joe Ingram was placing a gag on defense attorney, Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga. After Weaver repeated a question to one of the state's key witnesses, Ingram became enraged and threatened to hold the lawyer in contempt of court if he repeated another question without permission, during the course of the trial. Such repetition is a common legal technique.

Greatest handicap of the defense in Friday and Saturday's sessions was lack of time to plan strategy and call witnesses. After the state rested its case, chief defense counsel Leon Ransom asked for a two day recess in which to prepare a defense. Without hesitation, Ingram called court for 10 a.m., Friday morning.

Granted Three Hours

In the morning, Ingram granted the defense a three hour recess to consult with witnesses hastily summoned from Columbia, the evening before. Most effective of the 12 witnesses heard before the court adjourned, Saturday was Julius Blair, 76 year old businessman, charged with planning and taking part in the shooting of Will Willsford.

Blair told the court his part in the release from jail of Mrs. Stevenson and her son, and in arranging for the youth's escape from the state. For an hour prior to the shooting, Blair said he was attending a meeting concerning building a new high school. The meeting was interrupted, when James W. Morton, local undertaker, warned the gathering that a mob was forming at the court house, and advised them to go to their homes.

Flight Described

Next to testify was Blair's son, Saul, 55 year old barber, who helped drive young Stevenson to Nashville. With him on the trip that placed him out of town during the shooting were: Robert Frierson, Tommy Neely, George Nicholson, and "Popeye" Bellafant.

In Saturday's session the first defendant on the stand was Meade Johnson, Mink Slide businessman, whose son James was killed inside the jail by Columbia police. His statement that he was at home when the policemen were fired upon was corraborated by his wife.

Suffering the most gruelling cross examination in the trial was Mrs. Marcia Mayes, cook at the bus terminal restaurant. In the strained atmosphere, Looby rose to make an objection to Bumpus questioning. Before he could speak Judge Ingram shouted "overruled." Looby protested but was told that whatever his objection was going to be, it was still overruled.

The state's case was handled in just the opposite manner. First state's witness to take the stand was arrogant, bull necked Lynn Bomar, leader of the highway patrol that raided Mink Slide. Bolstered by his reputation as a trigger happy sadist, Bomar was sneering and contemptuous in the face of cross examination, proudly admitting his role in the first raid, and the two jail killings.

Later in the day the state brought John A. Kincaid, former United Press agent, who is now employed, Press agent, who is now unemployed, to the stand. Kincaid released shortly after the Columbia incident told the court that defense counsel Weaver had made him drunk and attempted to bribe him. This unsupported testimony was repeatedly referred to by the prosecution throughout the rest of the state's case.

The trial is expected to end in less than 10 days, with conviction of the defendants a foregone conclusion. An appeal is as certain as a conviction, and the court has unwittingly supplied ample ground on which to base an appeal.

2nd Tenn. 'Riot' Trial Under Way

The Afro-American

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy went on trial in Maury County Circuit Court here last Friday on charges of attempted murder in the first degree. Baltimore, Md.

They are accused of shooting a highway patrolman while he was participating in a raid in Mink Slide, the colored section here, during the racial disturbances last February. Sat. 11-23-46

Twelve regular jurors and one alternate were selected in a court session which lasted until late in the night. Afro-American

Change of Venue Denied

Baltimore, Md.

Trial of the men, two of the original defendants, was grudgingly postponed by Judge Joe Ingram last July when NAACP defense counsel asked for postponement following news that Thurgood Marshall, special counsel, was ill.

Recent motions for a change of venue and to quash the jury trial were denied. It is expected that the proceedings will be similar in all respects to the trial in Lawrenceburg, which resulted in acquittal of 23 defendants. Sat. 11-23-46

Pillow and Kennedy are being defended by Z. A. Looby, Leon A. Ransom, Maurice M. Weaver and Thurgood Marshall, NAACP attorneys.

Tenn. Trials Set To Prove 3 Points

The Afro-American

Baltimore, Md.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — The State of Tennessee through three prosecutors, in the trial here sought to prove three things.

They are:

1. That there was a conspiracy among colored Columbians to commit violence against whites, based on the fact that they were seen with or later found near or bearing arms. Sat. 10-12-46

2. That because shotgun ammunition was found in certain Mink Slide business establishments the morning after a shooting spree in the area, certain individuals reputed to have been in the specified vicinity shot Patrolman Wilsford.

3. That there was sufficient light in the sector to obviate any contention of mistaken identity on the part of persons claiming to have been defending themselves against marauders.

It has worked out, however, that the State prosecutors have failed in a like number of important instances.

1. The State has not specifically charged any individual with shooting the policeman.

2. The State has not succeeded in placing a gun of the type known to have wounded the officer in the hand of any defendant.

3. The State has not proved that there was not a mob threat prior to the shooting of the officer sufficient to instill defensive fear in colored Columbians.

Believed to Show Whites Led Riot

The Afro-American

Baltimore, Md.

Lawyers' Arguments Thrown Out Illegally

Sat. 9-28-46

EPITHETS USED

No Facilities Available for Counsel, Defendants

By VINCENT TUBBS
AFRO Staff Correspondent

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — Charges that the FBI has refused to turn over pictures important to the defense of the 25 persons accused of participating in the Columbia race riot were made on Sept. 25 by Leon A. Ransom, senior defense counsel.

Declaring that the pictures are believed to show that National Guardsmen looted homes and stores in the colored section "Mink Slide," Mr. Ransom said that they might prove conclusively that the defendants acted in self-defense.

The FBI's refusal to make the pictures available was attributed to the fact that they were submitted to a Federal grand jury in March, and are covered by a ruling making grand jury evidence secret.

The jury, asked to indict white authorities in Columbia, for violating civil liberties, placed blame for the Feb. 25-28 riot on the colored group.

All Defense Motions Out

Meanwhile, degenerating to the point where the State prosecutor threatens bodily harm to a member of defense counsel, the trial of the 25 defendants muddles on in this hotbed of lynchers, Klansmen and hatemongers.

During the past week no less than four major infractions of decency and due processes of law have been enacted in the dirty littte county courthouse here.

In his usual high-handed manner, Judge Joe M. Ingram continues to overrule all defense motions, without regard for their plausibility or correctness. At the same time, he sustains practically every motion by the State.

Attacks on Defense Counsel

Furthermore, on Thursday, although Mr. Ransom explained that defense counsel was delayed because of an auto mishap during their 75-mile journey from Nashville, the judge cited defense counsel in contempt and fined them $50 each for being 15 minutes late.

On the same day, exasperated because he was corrected on a point of law before jurymen and a packed courtroom, Attorney General Paul Bumpus struck a new low in professional indecency.

Calling Attorney Ransom a "s.o.b.," he threatened to "wrap a chair around his goddam head." He was not reprimanded.

Having completed selection of a 12-man jury, with a 13th alternate whose selection brought applause from the packed spectators seats, the trial entered the initial stages of presentation of evidence on Friday.

Bumpus Intervenes

Again, before the first witness for the State had left the stand further blatant abuse of jurisprudence was enacted.

Charles D. McKissack, Columbia farmer and part-time surveyor, was called by the State to present its Exhibit A, a map of the town including the colored section of "Mink Slide."

Defense counsel objected to the exhibit because of the inclusion of red lines, admitted by McKissack as drawn at the instance of Bumpus and proposing to show the progress of officers alleged to have been shot by the defendants.

Map Retained

Z. Alexander Looby, one of the three NAACP defense lawyers, argued that the map should not be admitted since its red lines seek to detail action which has not been proved, but Judge Ingram overruled the motion.

Maurice Weaver, white, the third NAACP attorney, brought out during cross-examination of the witness that the map is not drawn to scale and is otherwise inaccurate, but again the motion to have it thrown out was overruled.

Afro-American

Policeman Admits Error

Bolstering Weaver's argument, however, was the testimony of the second State witness, Will Willsford, the police officer alleged to have been seriously wounded by the defendants during the fray.

Willsford admitted, reluctantly, that the map is incorrect on the basis of his knowledge of the town obtained during a tour of service as superintendent of streets.

Baltimore, Md.

Statement Retracted

Another of the four policemen allegedly shot, Police Chief J. Walter Griffin, 70, told the jury that he was "pretty sure" that he had given his identity when he walked into the Mink Slide section to meet gunshot fire.

During cross-examination, however, Weaver read to Griffin a statement made in March, in which the chief admitted not having revealed that he was a police officer. After floundering, he denied the statement. Sat. 9-28-46

All four policemen admitted under further cross-examination that it was too dark in Mink Slide to see who did the shooting.

Some Photos Admitted

Another highlight of the week end's proceedings was the introduction by the State of a photograph purported to show buckshot wounds on Willsford's body but the denial of defense efforts to introduce mob photos from a well-known magazine.

It was held that no photos from newspapers or magazines are admissable, although most of the principals in the mob pictures are recognizable as Columbians.

Precedents not Wanted

At another time the defense sought to establish reasonable basis for the defensive action of the accused but Judge Ingram had the jury removed from the room for eight minutes before charging defense attorneys that any continuance of this line of thought is inadmissable.

They argued that the 1933 lynching of Cordy Cheek, when the victim was publicly castrated, and that of Henry Choate, whose body was hanged from the courthouse window, gave colored Columbians reason to expect another lynching at the time of the mob's invasion of Mink Slide in February.

No Relief Seen

No relief from the court's bold disregard of American justice is expected, and there are indications that efforts will be made to enforce every conceivable hardship on defense counsel.

Authentic sources report that Bumpus proposes to ask for night sessions which would make further defense of the case a physical impossibility for defense counsel.

Already the lawyers are forced to live and eat in Nashville because of lack of any facilities for colored people in Lawrenceburg, and they must make the 154-mile round trip to and from court by car each day.

No Facilities Available

The 25 defendants are also compelled to travel from their home in Columbia, 35 miles away, each day, and since there are no eating places for colored here, sandwiches and other cold foods are brought along.

A keg of drinking water is also brought, since there is no fountain for colored here. Further, a marked stall in the corner which is never cleaned, is all the sanitary facilities available in the town for colored.

The impossible conditions were cited when this town was under consideration as a trial site, but the objection was blandly ignored.

To Carry Fight On

However, declaring that "the court and prosecution are so biased that a fair trial is impossible," Ransom told reporters over the week end, "We intend to carry our fight to the Supreme Court, if necessary."

"But," he continued, "it may go no farther than the Supreme Court of Tennessee because, in my opinion, the prosecution has made so many errors of law that the Lawrenceburg decision won't hold water."

Selection of Jury in Tenn. Speeded

The Afro-American

Judge 'Challenges' Men in Groups

Baltimore, Md.

KLAN ISSUE IGNORED

Health Examinations Given Ten Chosen

Sat. 9-21-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—In an unprecedented attempt to speed up the selection of the jury to try the 25 persons accused of participation in the February race riot at Columbia, Judge Joe M. Ingram has taken over the defense task of challenging prospective jurors by questioning them en masse.

So far, after a month of trial only 10 of the required 13 jurors have been selected from three panels totaling 801 veniremen, and only 50 remain to be questioned.

Meanwhile, since NAACP lawyers have exhausted all but 37 of their peremptory challenges in an effort to guarantee the defendants a fair trial, completion of the jury is expected at any time.

None Singled Out

Taking over the defense's work, Circuit Court Judge Ingram not only has interrogated the prospective jurors in groups about their prejudices and attitudes about the trials, but also has attempted to "settle" the vital Klan issue with three questions. They are:

1. Did you mean ever belong to the KKK?
2. Do you believe in law and order?
3. Do you believe in taking the law in your own hands?

Klan Ignored as Issue

However, admission of membership now or in the past has not been the basis of disqualification for jury service. Instead, Judge Ingram has ruled them disqualified for various other reasons.

Previously, Judge Ingram had held several veniremen qualified for service, although they had admitted belief in the Klan's principles.

Klan Member 'Unbiased'

One of those rejected last week, a roughened farmer with tobacco juice running down his whiskers called out that he still believed in the Klan but denied having any prejudice against colored persons. He was excused on the grounds of ill health.

Still another of the Kluxers, a man in his thirties, said, "I was raised down in south Alabama and I just ain't used to a 'n----r' in court." He was eliminated on legal technicality.

That the trial will be a long one is indicated by the fact that the 10 jurors already selected have undergone thorough medical examinations to determine whether they can endure a lengthy trial. The thre to be chosen also will be examined.

Meanwhile, Oliver W. Harrington, NAACP director of publicity has rushed to Tennessee to assure the greatest possible publicity and to arouse the interest of the general public in the case.

Walter White

The Defender Chicago, Ill.

Columbia Whitewash

COMPLETELY IGNORING the criminals and centering its anger on those who exposed the crime of Feb. 25-26 at Columbia, Tenn., the Federal grand jury has perpetrated one of the most flagrant whitewashes in American history. To add to the shocking denouement Federal Judge Elmer D. Davies (who was vigorously opposed by the NAACP in 1936 because of his admission he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan and whose confirmation was attained by slick parliamentary trickery by Senator Kenneth McKellar), said of the Grand Jury's report that it "should put an end to the irresponsible and scurrilous rumors that have been so freely circulated over the country and should be a reassurance to those of both the white and Negro races who sincerely desire to live together in peace and harmony."

Davies can rest assured that neither of his hypocritical wishes will come true. Negroes nor decent whites, even those of the latter race who live in Ed Crump's and McKellar's Tennessee, will ever let the Columbia case die. "Irresponsible and scurrilous" more aptly fit his statements and the Grand Jury's report when one looks at the photographs taken by **Life Magazine** and the NAACP showing the wanton destruction wreaked by Tennessee State Highway patrolmen when they and the militia had control of the Negro section of Columbia. Nor will Davies and all his ilk ever be allowed to forget the coldblooded murder of two defenseless Negroes in the Maury County jail. Sat. 6-22-46

Who Is Next?

AS EVERY reader of the **Defender** well knows, far more is involved in this case than what happens to Negro citizens of Columbia, highly important though that be. A pattern of terrorism as cruelly calculated as any ever devised by Hitler's Storm Troopers was sought to be set. If that is not checked the same thing can and will happen all over the United States. And it will happen not only to Negroes but to labor and members of other minorities.

There are things to do to avert such a catastrophe.

First, send a telegram yourself to President Harry S. Truman at the White House vigorously but intelligently urging him to instruct the Department of Justice, the War and Navy Departments and any other appropriate agencies of the Federal Government to see that the criminals responsible for the Columbia outrage are brought to justice and that Negro citizens in the South or elsewhere are protected to the hilt in their constitutional rights.

Second, send a telegram to Attorney-General Tom Clark at the Department of Justice at Washington, urging that he order a new grand jury convened and that FBI agents who are neither in sympathy with the mob nor easily intimidated be assigned to the case.

The Fight Continues

THIRD, get your church, labor union, social club and every other organization to which you belong to send similar telegrams. Ask your pastor to talk about the case in his sermons and prayers until justice is done. Ask your local newspapers to cover adequately in their news columns and editorial pages the shameful facts about the case, particularly the current hearings on the exclusion of Negro jurors and the demand for a change of venue and for separate trials for the 31 defendants and, even more particularly, coverage by special correspondents of the trials themselves which will probably take place in September.

Fourth, you can rush as large a check or money order as you can afford (and get your church, lodge, labor union and club to do likewise) to the NAACP, 20 West 40th st., New York 18, N.Y., for the terribly heavy legal and investigation expenses. As courageous a feat as any soldier in battle is now being performed daily (and nightly) by Thurgood Marshall, Alexander Looby, Maurice Weaver and Leon Ransom as defense counsel. So hostile and tense is the atmosphere that many of us closely in touch with the situation have literally lived with our hearts in our mouths for the past few weeks. Are you willing to match their courage and service with your dollars so that no stone will be left unturned to right this wrong?

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3 Pupils Taken From Classes by Police to Witness Stand

The Afro-American, Baltimore, Md.

Sat. 10-5-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Three colored high school children were yanked from their classrooms in Columbia on Sept. 25 to a waiting police car, and placed on the witness stand by the State in the prosecution of 25 Columbia defendants in the February riot.

The children were brought to court, without their parents' knowledge, to testify that James Bellenfant, ex-soldier, and one of the defendants, had acted as a Paul Revere riding through Columbia's ghetto telling the people a lynching was on foot and to prepare for trouble.

Horace Snipes, 18, high school senior, whom Judge Ingram called "intelligent," and George Robert Watkins, 18, and another pupil told almost identical stories for the State, and of how they got to court. Watkins said he was scared, and felt he was being treated like a criminal.

Atlanta, Ga. Journal
October 18, 1946

Justice to the Negro

Boston Herald

THE COLUMBIA, Tenn., murder case which threatened to provoke another "Scottsboro boys" agitation, has happily ended in a verdict regarded as fair and reasonable by even the most outspoken critics of the trial. Following a night of rioting and shooting last February in "Mink Slide," the Negro section of Columbia, 103 Negroes were jailed. A few weeks ago 25 of them went on trial in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., on charges of attempted murder. "General" Bumpus, the prosecuting attorney, utilized every courtroom trick—including, of course, attacks on Northern "carpet-baggers"—to obtain a verdict of guilty. But the all-white jury acquitted 23 of the defendants and, while finding the remaining two guilty recommended sentences of "not more than 21 years."

The North, sometimes, we fear, in a "holier-than-thou" manner, so often finds occasion to condemn the treatment of Negroes in the South, that it is good to be able to note this instance of fair play. One of the "carpet-baggers" who attended the trial, Vincent Sheean, was so impressed by the jury's quiet resistance to racial and sectional appeals that he revised his thoughts on the Negro question. "Doctrinaire elements of the extreme left are no more helpful in this matter than is Mr. Bumpus himself," he wrote in the New York Herald Tribune. "The Negroes have a long, hard road to hoe, but those who wish to help them will have to learn how to appeal to the good will of Southern white men, our brothers and our fellow-citizens, who have so magnificently proved their mettle by this verdict."

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Mockery Being Made of Law at Columbia Case Hearings

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

56a

By VINCENT TUBBS
AFRO Staff Correspondent

Sat. 8-24-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — Fair trial of 25 men indicted for assault with intent to kill in connection with the February riot in Columbia is no more possible here than if Bilbo, Rankin and Hitler were sitting as a three-man tribunal..

Already, with but a week of proceedings completed, epithets have flown high, wide and handsome in the little red brick courthouse here, and mockery is being made of the due processes of the law.

A battle of legal wits, through which NAACP defense attorneys hope to pack the trial records with State-committed errors, is being raged against a backdrop of general disapproval, discontent and preconceived notions about the guilt of the defendants.

Comedy of Errors

The drama—a humorless comedy of errors—began on Monday when NAACP counsel sought to quash a panel of 312 prospective jurors on the basis of prior systematic exclusion of colored persons, and a general state of prejudice against the defendants by residents of the county.

In this connection, Z. Alexander Looby, chief NAACP defense attorney, read into the records a letter written by Attorney-General Paul F. Bumpus and published in local papers which, by its wording, precludes any justice in the case except convictions.

However, as testimony of 35 witnesses called to substantiate the contentions of the motions were called, the court ruled that methods of selecting jurors prior to this case could not be questioned, and the inclusion of 14 colored persons on the present panel negated any claim of exclusion.

Officials Testify

It was brought out, nevertheless, in questioning of J. T. Crews, county jury commissioner, that when the commission met last month to draw names of prospective jurors, it was agreed they "should not put some names" of colored people in the box.

Atty.-Gen. Bumpus, called to the stand, also admitted that he could recall only one colored person ever having been summoned for jury service in the county in the past ten years.

The next trick NAACP lawyers pulled out of the bag was to ask Judge Ingram to disqualify himself because inferences of his agreement with the attorney general's demand for convictions are contained in the widely-publicized letter.

Judge in a Hurry

This motion was overruled and the judge insisted that the defense "hurry along" calling the first of the 312 prospects for examination.

Afro-American

Herman Vandiver, a lumberman, first to undergo a gruelling 45-minute examination, stated, among other things, that he could not enter the jury box with a preclusion of the innocence of the defendants because he already had notions of their guilt.

Countless efforts of the defense to have him disqualified "for cause," were overruled by the judge and the man was finally excused by utilization of one of the defense's 200 challenges.

Heated Debate

Examination of this and other prospective jurors resulted in defense motions being overruled in each of nine pleas while State exceptions were sustained in each of six instances.

One of the most heated debates of this phase of the drama ensued when the State took exception to the defense questioning prospective jurors on their attitudes toward colored persons.

By sustaining the State's objections, the judge refused to permit them to answer such questions as, "Would you give the same weight to the testimony of a colored person as you would to that of a white person?"

Juror's Conscience

Defense counsel argued, in this connection, that the conscience of jurors should be sifted on such issues because the 15 complainants are white whereas the defendants are colored, but he was again overruled.

Baltimore, Md

Five other prospective jurors called during the first day were excused peremptorily by either the defense or the State, with only one being excused by the court when he admitted he would not consider the testimony of a colored man against that of a white man.

Sat

J. E. Collier, the only prospective colored juror, called by the end of the week's proceedings, was quickly excused on the peremptory challenge of the State.

Waiting Protested

On Friday, as the court convened, a bloc of the remaining 305 prespective jurors circulated a petition which 40 signed stating they were going home because they weren't getting paid for standing around doing nothing.

Their dissatisfaction stemmed from the fact that each had to report daily at the courthouse to await his call, and the farms and businesses of many were suffering because of their absence which it appeared might last two or three weeks.

The Afro-American

Judge Ingram immediately revised the schedule for calling the veniremen, naming 25 to be called each day through September 2 when the panel will be exhausted.

VA Aide Prefers Jail

By Friday evening, only 32 of the 312-man panel had been examined and all except one had been refused by either the defense or the State.

The first man accepted by both sides was Percy Barfield, employee of t' Veteran's Administration, who it appeared he would have to se houted to the court that he woulo iail first.

His selection by the se was an unexpected trick on tate prosecutors who had expec the man would be refused and the defense would have to use another of its peremptory challenges.

The court dismissed the man in respect of his contention that his work, vital to veterans, would suffer.

Baltimore, Md.

Legal Tug o' War

This legal battle has man ramifications, paramount among which are the defense tactics of delay and the State's and court's efforts to speed up the trial.

Further, in jury selection, the defense seeks to prove through examination, that persons called have preconceived notions of the defendants' guilt, or are prejudiced in their attitudes towards colored—either of which would normally disqualify them for service.

Sat. 8-24-46

The State hopes that in its efforts to throw out prospective jurors, the defense will use up all its peremptory challenges, forcing them to eventually accept a jury since the court will not sustain any other pleas for removal.

State Adamant

At the same time, the State proposes to throw out all colored prospective jurors in exercise of its 100 peremptory challenges because of the publicly discussed conclusion that no white man in the county will serve on a jury with a colored man.

In this regard it has been pointed out that a jury can never be separated during a trial, and should a colored man be included, the jury would have to be housed, fed and slept together—a thing Lawrence could never stomach.

Significantly, local white residents in expressing their resentment against the removal of the trial here against their opposition, are also balking efforts of the court to select a jury.

Curious Spectators

Having learned that an expression of prejudice against either the defendants or the State will disqualify them, many are adamant, unco-operative on the stand, and viciously castigate colored people when asked if they feel they could give the defendants a fair trial.

The courtroom, seating 176 persons, is crowded daily with local whites who have come from far and wide to "see these 'n - - - s' with coats and ties on," or to hear NAACP lawyers "talk back to General Bumpus and the judge."

Brings Own Food

Defendants make no effort to obtain food in the town during midday recess, preferring to bring basket lunches from Columbia, 34 miles away, which they devour in the courtroom with something of a picnic atmosphere.

The room is well appointed with spittoons but none—not even the court officer—uses them since the floor is so handy.

Around the town, citizens have expressed reactions to the trial ranging from political castigation of persons responsible for transferring the hearings from Columbia, here, to the desire that all defendants be jailed and the key thrown away.

May Last 10 Years

At the present pace, with 25 prospective jurors being called each day, selection of the jury is expected to take two weeks, after which presentation of evidence may take months.

In the end, however, the State of Tennessee, through its prosecutor and the judge, seems bent on obtaining conviction of all defendants, notwithstanding the legal errors committed or the evidences of prejudice and unfairness recorded.

NAACP counsel will use these errors, already enough to sway any higher court, to obtain reversals of whatever convictions occur and subsequent hearings may go on for ten years.

Defense Rests In Tennessee Trial

Daily Worker
New York, N.Y.
Wed. 10-2-46

LAWRENCEBERG, Tenn., Oct. 1.—Dr. Leon A. Ransom, defense attorney in the trial of the Columbia Negroes, announced this afternoon the defense had rested its case. Legal argument, winding up Tennessee's longest and most significant lawsuit, is scheduled to begin tomorrow. After two state rebuttal witnesses have taken the stand. the case is expected to reach the all-white jury late tomorrow night or Thursday.

Whitewash at Columbia, Tenn.

The Afro American Baltimore, Md. Sat. 6-22-46

Failure of a Federal grand jury to find "evidence of civil right violations" after a six-week investigation of last February's pogrom at Columbia, Tenn., smells to high heaven.

As has been frequently the case in recent years, the jury blamed the "Communist press" for attempts to foster racial hatred through publication of "inflammatory" articles and pamphlets.

Although 390 witnesses were called, the jury could find nothing in their testimony to support charges of illegal search and seizure, brutality and intimidation. All of this, despite photographs showing victims who had been beaten and business places which had been smashed and looted by men wearing the uniform of State police.

Some 68 persons were arrested (none white) and 31 still face trial. AFRO reporters saw with their own eyes the scenes of destruction and heard the stories of the victims. Instead of calling these individuals, the jury called only the aggressors.

If the mangled bodies of the dead and injured and the devastated business places and residences are not sufficient evidence, we wonder just what is needed to convince the jury that a crime has been committed.

Threat to Hang Negroes Told At Their Trial

The Courier-Journal
Louisville, Ky.
Tues. 10-1-46

Race-Riot Case Witness Says Plot Overheard

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 30 (AP)—An elderly Negro woman testified today at the trial of 25 Negroes charged with participating in the Columbia, Tenn., racial disorders that she overheard two white men on the City's public square say "We are going to take those Negroes out of jail and hang them."

The witness, Mrs. Hannah Peppers, said the white men were referring to her daughter, Gladys Stephenson, and her grandson, James Stephenson. The Stephensons were arrested February 25 on charges of assaulting a white radio repairman in his downtown shop.

Released Under Bond.

The Stephensons later were released from jail under $5,000 bonds. James was put on a train bound for Chicago the night the four policemen were shot in the Mink Slide district.

The 25 defendants are charged with attempted murder in the shooting.

The trial moved along rapidly and defense attorneys were confident they could wind up their case "sometime tomorrow."

Mrs. James Morton, wife of a Columbia funeral director who also is a defendant, told the court during the afternoon session that she had "no idea" how the 11 men arrested in her home the night of the disorders entered her house.

Tennessee The Defender Chicago, Ill.

LAWRENCEBURG, site of the now-famous "Columbia, Tenn. riot trials" is the center of an area long known for its "Niggers don't be caught here after sundown" and "Niggers read and run" signs and practices. Thanks to unsurpassed news reporting by white and colored newsmen, the world now knows about the lack of facilities "for colored" which forced colored defendants, defense attorneys and newsmen to drive 155 miles a day, and to bring their lunches or go hungry. Sat. 11-2-46

Defense Attorney Leon Ransom was actually threatened with having a chair "wrapped around your g - - d - - - - - neck." The District Attorney borrowed a loaded cane from a penitentiary guard and carried it with him, putting it carefully in front of him on the table each day, and telling reporters he "may have some use for it." The Assistant Prosecutor was so aghast when Ransom said something was not so, when he had just said it was, that he raised his arm as if to strike, but beat a hasty retreat when Ransom came out from behind the defense table.

The judge fined defense attorneys $50 each when they were 15 minutes late because of a tire blowout, and threatened jail if it happened again. But it was Ransom who whispered to him what psycho-neurosis meant when the judge who didn't know kept asking a prospective juror "where does this thing hurt you?"

Defense attorneys were a source of wonder to Lawrenceburg citizens who had "never seen colored persons like these before." What really fascinated them was Alexander Looby's clipped British accent. They could be heard saying: "Why that nigger talks just like a white man," and finally one or two of them had to ask Ransom and Thurgood Marshall: "Is that Looby really a Negra (Negro)?"

PLACE DEFENDANTS AWAY FROM COLUMBIA

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Tues. 10-1-46

Special to the Daily Worker

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 30.—Dr. Leon A. Ransom, defense counsel in the trial of the Columbia Negroes announced today the defense would complete its case tomorrow and demand dismissal of trumped up "attempt to murder" charges for all 25 accused men.

He made this statement after Thomas W. Neely and George Nicholson testified Sol Blair and James Bellanfont, leading defendants, were with them racing by auto to Nashville with James Stephenson when four policemen were wounded in Columbia.

Stephenson, 19-year-old Navy veteran, is the Negro a lynch mob was seeking the night of the Columbia "trouble."

The witnesses told how they got the veteran into a car and away from Columbia in the nick of time. They had two breakdowns on darkened country roads and changed cars twice.

"Why did you take back roads?" Assistant District Attorney Hugh Shelton asked Neeley.

"We were dodging the mob," the witness replied.

Neeley told how Sol Blair went to the Nashville railroad station, bought a ticket and put Stephenson on an early morning train for Chicago. Blair, Bellanfant and Nicholson, were arrested when they returned to Columbia before daybreak.

Knoxville, Tenn. Journal
Sept. 11, 1946

Judge Denies Quash Motion In Race Case

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 10 (AP)—Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram today denied a defense motion to quash a venire of 169 men being questioned to provide three additional jurors needed to try 25 Columbia Negroes for participating in last February's racial disturbances.

Defense moved the venire was illegal because some members of it received summonses before the previous panel had been depleted. The judge ruled that it was a "pick up panel" and not drawn from the jury box and hence "not subject to quashing." He termed the defense motion "another attempt at delay."

Further streamlining the questioning procedure, Judge Ingram added questions pertaining to the Ku Klux Klan to his list of those on race and law asked from the bench to expediate the case.

Thirty-four prospects were on the stand today, of which the court excused 12 for cause, the state challenged 4 and the defense 17.

Since August 15, 484 veniremen have appeared with the court excusing 319, the state challenging 27 and the defense 128.

Tenn. Judge Qualifies More KKK Adherents

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Tues. 9-10-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 9.—Four men who testified they believed in the Ku Klux Klan's principles and two who can neither read or write were declared qualified for jury service today by Judge Joe M. Ingram in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes.

Defense attorneys, objecting to the ruling, had no other alternative but to excuse the six with peremptory challenges.

Arthur Pollock, 58-year-old farmer, was selected as the ninth juror this morning.

Two panels totaling 542 veniremen have been exhausted. Notifications were sent out for the new veniremen to be in court tomorrow.

The first venireman qualified today by the court and removed by peremptory defense challenge was O. A. Tucker, questioned by chief defense counsel Z. A. Looby. Tucker declared he believed in some acts of the KKK. Quizzed by the Judge, Tucker testified he was prejudiced against Negroes "in a way."

"You wouldn't let that prejudice interfere with trying this law suit?" Judge Ingram asked.

"No," the venireman replied.

Tucker was declared qualified by the court.

L. S. Litrell, a farmer, testified he believed **"to some extent"** in KKK principles.

The defense asked that the veniremen be removed for cause. The judge ordered the defense to **"move on to other questions."** Litrell was ruled **"qualified"** Dr. Leon Ranson, defense lawyer, removed him peremptorily.

Jesse Matthews and G. A. Benifield likewise stated under oath they supported parts of the KKK white supremacy program. The judge declared them fit to serve. They were removed by peremptory defense challenges.

J. A. Cross and J. W. Chandler told the court they could not read or write. Defense attorneys asked the judge to disqualify them. Ingram said they had **"horse sense"** and passed them to the defense for peremptory challenges.

Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
Sept. 21, 1946

GUN BLAST TOLD AT RIOT HEARING

BY CLIFTON L. PAISLEY

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 20—(AP) — Columbia, Tenn., Police Chief J. Walter Griffin, 70, testified today that he was "pretty sure I said 'this is the police'" just before blasts of shotgun fire struck him and three other officers in Columbia's Mink Slide Negro business district the night of Feb. 25.

He and the other three have testified in the two-day-old trial of 25 Negroes charged as accessories or with firing the shots, but none of the witnesses offered by the state has identified any of the defendants as those responsible.

On cross examination by Maurice Weaver, an attorney for the Negroes, Griffin said he did not recall telling Weaver in a stenographic statement shortly after the occurrence: "I didn't tell them who we were and neither did the other officers.

He said, moreover, four street lights were burning on the Mink Slide intersection they entered and that there was "plenty of light there to see who we were," although the rest of the street was dark and the group firing the shots could be seen only indistinctly.

On re-direct examination by Special Prosecutor H. T. Shelton, the police chief answered affirmatively this question: "When guns are fired from Mink Slide, don't the colored people know for sure that officers will come to investigate?"

It was a series of shots heard about 9:40 p.m., following a day of racial tension, that brought the four to the block-long Negro business quarter, Griffin said.

He said two other policemen followed behind the four to hold back a small crowd which he described as mainly "youngsters" but contained "six or eight men" who tagged along behind the officers.

Earlier another officer testified he "heard a little whispering" about the possibility of a mob forming. Patrolman Sam Richardson said he heard this after tension had arisen over a disturbance involving a white radio repairman, a Negro woman and her son.

Witnesses Testify Negro Predicted Racial Trouble

The Courier-Journal Louisville, Ky.

Sun. 9-29-46

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 28 (AP)—Four witnesses testified today that James Morton, one of 25 Negro defendants in the Columbia racial-disorders case, interrupted a school meeting the night of last February 25 and admonished the audience to go home because, he said, there would be trouble in the Negro-populated Mink Slide area.

Paul Robeson, Negro singer, rubbed President Truman the wrong way with recent demands for an edict on lynching, Drew Pearson says on Page 4 of The Passing Show.

The witnesses said also that Julius Blair, another defendant, attended the meeting at which plans were discussed for raising money for a new high school. Morton, Blair and the other 23 are being tried in Lawrence County Circuit Court here on charges of attempted murder and accessory.

Norfolk, Va. Pilot
June 20, 1946

Fight to Free 26 Negroes in Riot Case Fails

Columbia, Tenn., June 19.—(AP)—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) lost today a three and one-half week battle to free 26 Negroes from an assortment of criminal charges arising from the racial disorders here last February.

As a consequence the defendants will be tried, probably within a week or so, but not before NAACP attorneys seek removal of the cases to another jurisdiction.

The oral opinion delivered by Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram, who presided at the non-jury hearing held that there was no merit in the NAACP complaint that the indictments were invalid because they were voted by an all-white grand jury.

The county board of jury commissioners acted lawfully, the court held, in the selection of names from the jury box and in the use of county tax records from which it chose prospective jurors. He added there was "indisputable evidence" that the list of prospective grand jurors for the February term of Circuit Court contained the names of 10 Negroes.

"The fact that numerous citizens of the colored race testified that they had never served on a jury and had never been summoned for jury service," Judge Ingram said, "is not conclusive that Negroes have been excluded from jury service."

A total of 223 NAACP witnesses, almost all Negroes, and approximately 100 State witnesses testified during the hearing. Chief NAACP Counsel Thurgood Marshall indicated several times in the course of the hearing that the case would be appealed to higher courts in event the motion to quash was denied.

The defendants are charged either with attempted murder or with being accessories before the fact. Four other Negroes also are under indictment for lesser crimes in connection with the same disorders.

Immediately after the court's opinion was delivered, NAACP counsel moved for separate trials for each of the defendants. The court overruled the motion for removal of the trial to another court.

The defendants all were arrested in connection with the racial disturbance in the "Mink Slide" Negro business quarter of Columbia February 25. Two Negroes were killed and several whites and Negroes were wounded in the two-day disorders.

Since this hearing began a Federal grand jury in Nashville reported it found no evidence of civil rights violations during the affair.

Tenn. Judge OK's Chain Gang Boss

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 2.—A former chain gang boss who said all Negroes are "criminally inclined" tried hard today to get on the jury to try the 25 Columbia Negroes. Tues 9-3-46

He is Albert Patterson, a Lawrence County farmer. He testified under examination by Dr. Leon A. Ransom, attorney of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People that he would believe a white man before he would a colored man.

Dr. Ransom demanded Judge Joe M. Ingram, trial judge, remove the prospective juror for cause.

The judge turned to District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus. Bumpus declared Patterson was qualified. The Court upheld the prosecutor.

Patterson, under further defense examination, testified he had heard "a lot of talk" about the Columbia disturbance of Feb. 25 in which the Negroes were charged with attempt to commit murder on a white mob.

"I worked a lot of colored men on the chain gang six years ago, when I was a guard," the venireman stated. 9-3-46 (Tues)

"The only colored people I ever dealt with were either criminals or criminally inclined."

"Do you think all Negroes are criminally inclined?" Dr. Ransom asked. "Yes," Patterson replied quickly.

Dr. Ransom again moved to challenge the former chain gang boss for cause. Judge Ingram again overruled the motion.

Questioned again by the prosecution, Patterson said he also saw white men on the chain gang, but, he added, he held no prejudice against the white race for that reason.

Judge Ingram again ruled Patterson was qualified to try the Columbia case. The defense was compelled to eliminate Patterson with a peremptory challenge.

With only 25 veniremen remaining out of an original jury panel of 213, the defense has used 55 of its 200 peremptory challenges. The prosecution has used 15 of its 100 peremptorys.

Only five jurors are in the box, and examination of prospective jurors moves into the fourth week tomorrow. A new jury panel is being formed with the hope of finding more men to fill out the trial jury. Tues 9-3-46.

Meanwhile, considerable resentment was being expressed throughout Lawrenceburg against Judge Ingram's action Saturday on jailing Bracki Hudson, local garage mechanic and prospective juror, when the latter protested the Court's ruling which brought the trial here from Columbia.

The news that Hudson, popular baseman on the Lawrenceburg ball team, was hustled off to jail to serve 10 days and pay a $50 fine spread through the town like wild fire. Hudson was scheduled to play in an important game yesterday, and the opinions expressed by him in Court are those expressed by a majority of local citizens.

Judge Ingram quickly ordered Hudson released from jail Saturday evening. He removed the sentence and fine this morning, but resentment against his action is still high. Hudson was the third prospective juror ordered to jail and later released.

DENIES POLICE HELPED SACK NEGROES' HOUSES

The Times New York, N.Y. Sat.

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 26—Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, white lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who is defending twenty-five Negroes cherged with inciting the rioting in Columbia, Tenn., in February, sought to show n court today that State police helped to destroy property in the Negro business district when the disorders broke out.

The chief witness for the State at today's session was Lynn Bomar, State Patrol Commissioner and former All-American end on the Vanderbilt football team. He said his men surrounded the Negro district on the night of Feb. 25, when four Columbia policemen were shot there, and rounded up more than 100 Negroes the next morning. Sat 9-28-46

Under cross-examination, he admitted that he and his men entered the house of James Morton, one of the defendants, without a search warrant, and found eleven Negroes and some fifteen shotguns, pistols and rifles and a quantity of ammunition.

Judge Joe Ingram instructed the jury to forget parts of this testimony because Commissioner Bomar's entrance without a warrant was "unlawful." At the same time, the judge permitted testimony to stand that the Bomar party found firearms concealed in the house.

Under cross-examination by Mr. Weaver, Commissioner Bomar shouted heatedly that his ben had nothing to do with the destruction of property in the course of the riots.

"That's okay, Mr. Bomar," said Mr. Weaver. "I know you were a football player."

Riot Trial Highlights

The Courier Pittsburgh, Pa.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—According to an authentic source last week, Attorney General Bumpus hinted that he would ask the court to hold night sessions. It was pointed out that in view of the fact that defense attorneys must now spend five hours a day on the road this would make further defense of the case almost a physical impossibility. Defense lawyers are forced to live in Nashville because there are no accommodations here for them. Sat. 9-28-46

* * *

Like the defense attorneys, the defendants also spend quite a bit of time each day on the road. They motor in each morning from Columbia and return there in the evening. Defendants and their attorneys bring their own lunches.

* * *

The all-white jury is composed of six farmers: W. E. Staggs, 65; John Pigg, 73; Andrew Jordan, 64; J. J. Cleveland, 58, and Howard Vanderford, 32. Others are: W. E. King, 60, school janitor; Segal Davis, 30, carpenter; John Bradley, 29, chemical plant worker; Herbert Patterson, 50, merchant; Frank Kersteins 62, contractor, and Bill Wilburn, 31 sawmill opeator. The aternate juror, Raymond Dunn, 30, is a truck driver.

* * *

A keg of drinking water is sent to the courtroom each day for the defendants and colored defense attorneys. There is no drinking fountain for them any place in this little town. In the court's toilet there is one stall-like affair marked for the use of Negroes. This is one part of the toilet that is never cleaned.

* * *

One juror was qualified by Judge Joe Ingram after the man had stated that he "couldn't believe anything a n——r said, even if he was under oath."

* * *

The Ku Klux Klan-studded crowd in the ramshackle courtroom applauded and cheered Wednesday as the final juror was selected. The defense had been forced to use all of its peremptory challenges. There was no doubt about Kansmen being in the courtroom because many of the prospective jurors admitted they were KKK members and in good standing with the hate organization. 9-28-46

At one time Prosecutor Bumpus asked the court to deny defense objections to Klansmen, declaring that the Klan stood for Americanism and law and order. Defense Attorney Looby then accused Bumpus of stumping for the Klan.

Policeman Tells Court Of Race Riot

The Courier-Journal

Trial of 25 Persons In Tennessee Begins

Louisville, Ky.

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 19 (AP)—A 66-year-old policeman, Will Wilsford, told Circuit Court this afternoon how he and three other officers were wounded by gunfire the night of February 25 in near-by Columbia in a flare-up for which 25 Negroes are being tried.

The officer, not yet fully recovered from the 70-odd shotgun pellets which struck him, said the four officers walked into the west end of Mink Slide, Columbia Negro business street, to investigate gunfire.

They were ordered to halt, he said, and had done so when someone yelled, "Fire!" So many shots were fired, Wilsford testified, that he could not estimate the number. Fri 9-20-46

The trial opened today after four months of legal skirmishing and a six-week grind to select the all-white jury.

The Columbia disorders resulted in the deaths of two Negroes and the wounding of a dozen other persons.

Change of Venue In Columbia Trial

New York, N.Y. P.M. 7-3-46

Counsel for the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People won a doubtful victory at Columbia, Tenn., when Judge Joe M. Ingram granted their request for a change of venue in the trial of 25 Negroes charged with attempted murder in the February race riot.s.

Judge Ingram set the trial for Aug. 6 at Lawrenceburg, a small agricultural and manufacturing town 34 miles south of Columbia.

"If there is any sentiment against Negroes in Maury Connty, it is doubly so in Lawrence County," protested Maurice Weaver, of defense counsel. The NAACP sought to withdraw its motion for a change of venue but was overruled.

Lynching Threatened, Says Negro

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 30 (AP)—An elderly Negro womar testified today at the trial of 25 Negroes charged with participating in the Columbia, Tenn., racial disorders, that she overheard two white men on the city's public square say, "We are going to take those Negroes out of jail and hang men,"

The witness, Mrs. Hannah Peppers, said the white men were referring to her daughter, Gladys Stephenson, and her grandson, James Stephenson. The Stephensons were arrested on February 25 on charges of assaulting a white radio repairman in his downtown shop.

The Negro witness said she went immediately to Julius Blair's business establishment in the Mink Slide Negro district and asked Blair, one of the defendants in this case, to "see about getting them out of jail and somewhere where they'll be safe."

The Stephensons were released from jail under $5000 bonds in the evening. James was put on a train bound for Chicago that night after four policemen were shot in the Mink Slide district.

The 25 defendants are charged with attempted murder in the shooting.

Murder Threat Against Weaver

The Defender Chicago, Ill.

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — A threat of death has been made on the life of Maurice Weaver, white attorney on NAACP's four-man defense staff, at the Columbia riot trial here, it was revealed this week. Sat. 6-22-46

This highpoint in the trial of 31 Negroes involved in the bloody racial clash came after 217 witnesses had taken the stand to testify that Negroes were systematically barred from jury service in Maury county.

The threat on Weaver's life was the first open break in the tense atmosphere cloaking the courtroom and the entire town.

Threat Overheard

Howard Dome, court stenographer, admitted that he had heard the threat made against the Chattanooga lawyer.

Reliable sources report other threats of violence against the ace attorneys assigned by NAACP to defend the 31 persons indicted by a lily-white grand jury. It has been rumored that white Columbians have vowed that the defense lawyers would end up at the bottom of nearby Duck River.

Thurgood Marshall, chief defense counsel, considers the situation so serious that he and his colleagues, Weaver, Leon Ransom, and Z. Alexander Looby, travel the 45 miles to Columbia each morning, returning each evening to Nashville.

Sheriff Blunders

Meanwhile, as the trial progressed, Maury County Sheriff J. J. Underwood strengthened the defense case by blurting out on the witness stand that he never saw a Negro serve on a local jury.

Grilled by Thurgood Marshall, the blundering police official, repeated his statement. Then, in an attempt to cover up the flustered sheriff added that Negroes had been called for jury service.

Q.—Name one of them.

A.—I can't do that.

Q.—When were they summoned?

A.—When I was Deputy Sheriff.

Q.—How many Negroes were summoned?

A.—Three or more.

Q.—Can you name them?

A.—No.

Q.—Where do they live?

A.—In Mt. Pleasant. I may get the information about them later today. The Defender

Q.—Where will you get it?

A.—From a man in the phosphate plant.

Q.—Who is the man?

A.—I don't know.

Clerk Testifies

Later, Miss Dabney Anderson, clerk of the Maury County Court, was called to the stand. She testified that she did not know whether any Negroes had been called for jury service during the seven years she had been clerk, but had noticed one Negro who had been summoned, then excused by the judge in open court.

Sheriff Underwood later claimed that a white woman had called him some time ago to ask for an excuse for an 80-year-old Negro who had been subpoenaed for jury service.

Defense attorneys introduced evidence to show that Tommy Baxter, one of the defendants, had died between the time of the indictment and the time of the trial. For the first time since the trial began, the prosecution offered no objection to a defense motion and the indictment against the deceased was abated.

Prosecution Prepares Case

The prosecution is expected to end its arguments by Tuesday. It is reported that State's Attorney Paul F. Bumpus will attempt to negate the defense's evidence by examining on the witness stand white men who have never been called for jury duty.

However, defense attorneys have indicated that their cross examination will follow this course:

Q.—Do you know of any whites who have served on juries in Maury county?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Do you know of any Negroes who have served on juries here?

Since there have been none, the answer will be "no."

The Federal Grand Jury's whitewash of the riot announced last Friday in Nashville is expected to affect the outcome of the trial here. It will also bolster up the anti-Negro sentiment which is evident, observers state.

Strategy Outlined

The defense's strategy, according to Atty. Z. Alexander Looby of Nashville is:

1. Ask dismissal on basis of barring Negroes for jury duty.
2. Ask for severance—separate trials for the 31 accused.
3. Ask change of venue on grounds that it is impossible to get a fair trial in this community

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Tennessee Riot Trial Scored By Vincent Sheean

The Informer

Houston, Texas

Sat. 10-5-46

Vincent Sheean, famous war correspondent and political observer, arraigns Circuit Court Judge Joe Ingram and Circuit Attorney General Paul Bumper of the Tennessee Race Riot Trial in a trenchant article published September 27 in the Washington Post. Mr. Sheean refers to the trial as "The American Tragedy of our time" and compares it to the famous Nazi destruction of Czechoslovakian Lidice.

He says, "A central theme in the American tragedy of time is being developed day by day in the county courthouse at Lawrenceburg, Tennessee surrounded by local indifference and national unconcern."

Significantly he points out that, 'The case is practically unique in the history of race relations because it contains no illusive or delusive elements. That is, the usual appeals to sentiment or prejudice, to Southern chivalry, to the defense of white womanhood or to other pretexts familiar in previous cases cannot be made here.

Continuing in the words of Vincent Sheean, "The most the State can hope to prove, judging by its witnesses up to now is that the terrified Negroes of Columbia, huddled in the darkness of their single business center on the night of **February 25** expecting attack by a white mob, fired enough ammunition to injure four white policemen who were coming towards the slope called Mink Slide (Columbia's Negro business district).

"No effort is made to prove who fired the shots that injured the policemen, or even, really, to connect the specific defendants in this trial with the shooting. In the darkness and terror of that night nobody knew and nobody saw anything. The 25 defendants appear to have been chosen according to the principle of collective responsibility, which makes its first appearance in American legal history.

"Under collective responsibility, as originated by the British in India, on the Indian border in Palestine, and afterwards developed by the Nazis in the occupied territories of Europe, a whole unit of population, such as a village, is held responsible for the deeds of any member thereof. The most notable case in Nazi practice was the destruction of the village of Lidice in Czechoslovakia.

"In the case here the whole male Negro population of Columbia was originally held responsible for the disturbance of February 25, 103 of them being held in jail without charges for a week and thoroughly beaten up, according to the evidence. During this week of terror the Negro shops in Mink Slide were smashed to smithereens by the State troopers and two of the 103 men and boys in the jail were shot during questioning, or, as the classic phrase has it here as in Germany, 'while trying to escape.' Among the survivors the State has picked a certain number to be defendants in the trial, choosing them impartially in ages from 17 to 76 and has selected a certain number of others to be witnesses. Ten of the 25 defendants served in the Army and Navy during the war which ended last year, and they sit this year in the Lawrenceburg courtroom in the odds-and-ends of their country's uniform.

The Informer

"The trial is conducted in a way which has to be seen to be believed. Even after a lifetime of reading accounts of these operations I was not prepared for the ruthlessness with which every scrap of explanatory evidence is ruled out. The prosecution is allowed to do anything it chooses, including the most bizarre outbursts of anger and threats of violence against defense counsel, while the defense is not permitted to introduce a shred of proof bearing upon the reasons for these events.

Houston, Texas

"Last Friday the chief defense attorney, Z. A. Looby of Nashville, presented a closely reasoned and coldly legal argument for the introduction of evidence on previous lynchings in Columbia, as well as on the general causes of the terror of the Negroes on February 25. This argument was presented in the absence of the jury, lest their ears be contaminated by the knowledge that in other States and other cases explanatory evidence has been admitted. The judge in this case ruled it all out. It has nothing to do with what he calls 'the law-suit' which seems to mean only the evidence presented by the State. If there had been 50 lynchings in Columbia in the present century, instead of only two in the past 20 years, it still would provide no reason for Negro apprehension, according to this ruling.

Sat.

"In the same way the defense is cut short whenever it attempts to bring home to the jury the quality of the State's witnesses. These consist chiefly of terrified Negroes who have been beaten up at various times and made to sign statements which few of them were ever permitted to read. All that I heard had been in the crowded and horrible Columbia jail during the week of terror when all were tortured and two murdered. One finds it almost impossible to believe that statements obtained in this way can be regarded as evidence anywhere on earth. 10-5-46

"As a matter of fact the chief prosecutor whose official title is circuit attorney general, seems very ill at ease himself with this kind of evidence and is careful to ask each witness if he was beaten up, tortured of maltreated in his (Bumpus') presence. "Were you at any time beaten up or physically maltreated in my presence" he asks, with his accent on the last three words. The Negro witness replies that he was not—which is quite enough for this court.

"We'll have no further reference to the beating of this witness" the court ruled with the first witness the other day. "Pass on to something else." Later on, with another witness the court used its favorite phrase, "Enough of that. Pass on about the lawsuit."

"The judge's name is Joe—Not Joseph, but Joe—Ingram, and his bark, sounding off in a sort of comic unison with that of Bumpus, chokes off everything in the whole complex of race relations which might make explicable the dreadful uprush of animal terror in Columbia last February. The defense is muzzled to a degree one had never believed possible in the United States, and is in effect limited, in its cross-examination of the State's witnesses, by the strict details of what Bumpus has elected to ask in his direct examination. The defense, of course, attempts at this stage—the prosecution's case—to shake the State's witnesses, to attack their evidence as having been obtained by torture and intimidation, or to show that the evidence offered cannot be true because of physicial or other reasons."

Mobile, Ala. Register

Sept. [illegible], 1946

Colored Trio Pictured As Rulers In District

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—(UP) Three of the 25 colored men on trial here on attempted murder charges growing out of a racial disturbance at Columbia, Tenn., last Winter were portrayed Wednesday as virtual rulers of the Mink Slide colored business district, where the uprising occurred.

The statement to that effect, however, was made by one of the two colored men who died as a result of the incident, and the state withdrew it after a witness was permitted to reveal its contents.

J. J. Underwood, former sheriff of Maury (Columbia) County, told the court after the jury had been cleared from the room that James Johnson, the now dead colored man, had made the statement to police shortly after the racial conflict.

1st Columbia Juror Admits He's Biased

Daily Worker 8-20-46

New York, N.Y.

Tues.

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 19. — W. E. Staggs, 64-year-old white farmer, was chosen today as the first juror to try the case of 25 Columbia Negroes on an attempt to murder charge.

Staggs was 27th venireman questioned during a week of examined prospective jurymen. Tues. 8-20-46

Accepted by State's Attorney Paul Bumpus, Staggs testified he could not give the Negroes a fair trial "because of the way I've been raised."

He likewise told the court he wouldn't give the same credit to testimony as offered by a Negro as he would to that of a white man.

Questioned by Maurice Weaver, attorney of the Nashville Association for Advancement of Colored People. Staggs said he believed in separated types of justice for Negroes and whites.

The farmer added he thought some of the principles of the Ku Klux Klan were "very good."

Weaver and defense attorneys Z. Alexander Looby and Dr. L. A. Ransom moved repeatedly for rejection of Staggs for cause. Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram overruled the defense motion rapidly after listening to arguments of the state.

KLAN NO SECRET

At one point Assistant District Attorney Hugh Shelton arose demanding questions concerning the plans be ruled out.

"The Ku Klux Klan is a secret organization," declared Shelton, **"and not a member knows what it stands for."** Attorney Weaver jumped to his feet, tore open a package and produced an official printed copy of the Ku Klux Klan ritual and White supremacy program.

Judge Ingram swiftly ruled against the defense attempt to place the Klan program evidence.

The defense having already used seven of its peremptory challenges to the state's two, surprised the District Attorney by accepting farmer Staggs as the first juror.

It was believed by the defense that the judge's failure to remove Staggs for cause can be pointed to later as a major reversible error if any or all of the defendants are convicted.

ALL PREJUDICED

Everyone of the prospective white jurors questioned so far declared in one way or another that they were prejudiced against Negroes.

Roy Blaskitt, a Dupont employee the 28th venireman said he assumed the Negroes were guilty.

Another, Ralph Bell, declared he couldn't take the testimony of a Negro.

B. E. Hammonds, a farmer, who declared he would **"rather not serve,"** testified **"Negroes are all right in their places."**

It is apparent now it will be impossible to pick non-prejudiced jury here to try the Negroes. All white persons I talked with in Lawrence County openly declared they are opposed to the Columbia Negroes and their action of fighting off a lynch mob last February. An overwhelming majority of the population, including the prospective jurors, have vigorously announced opposition to holding the trial here. One venireman. B. E. Hammonds, a farmer, proudly announced no Negro were allowed to live in his community. 8-20-46

"What is the reason for that?" asked defense counsel. Tues.

"That's the law" Hammonds replied. **"Every place I lived no Negroes lived."**

Ford Robertson, a Negro farmer, was the 32nd prospective juror called. The state challenged him peremptorily and he was removed in less than three minutes.

Robertson was the second Negro to be questioned for jury service in Lawrenceburg County in fifty years.

It is also clear the state does not intend to permit a Negro to serve on the jury in this case.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Attorney General Ask Defense Att'y To Step 'Outside'

The La. Weekly

New Orleans, La.

Sat. 10-5-46

(National Negro Press Ass'n.)

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., October 2.—With flaring tempers, lawyers involved in the trial of twenty-five men on charges growing out of the Columbia race riot of February 25 hurled heated retorts back and forth across the Circuit Court room last Tuesday.

The acrimony arose out of repudiation by a State witness of statements he was alleged to have made in a statement to Attorney General Paul Bumpus March 2. There was a heated argument between Bumpus and Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga, one of defense counsel, over the testimony of Alexander Bullock, the sixth colored witness called to the stand by the State.

Bullock repudiated a statement made by him. He said it contained some things he did not say, and omitted some things he did say.

In his testimony last Tuesday, Bullock said he saw two of the defendants after the shooting of four Columbia policemen on the night of February 25. He denied that he told Bumpus that one of the defendants said to him that they had been "down to Mink Slide, and there was some shooting, and we think we hit a policeman in the arm."

An argument between Bumpus and Weaver ensued. At one point, leaping to his feet, Bumpus shouted: "I dare him (Weaver) to accuse me of that outside of the courtroom."

Weaver replied, "If the attorney general thinks he's going to intimidate me in or out of the courtroom he's very much mistaken." Weaver had declared:

"The State has never investigated this case except from one angle, and we want to show whether it is the purpose of the State to uphold peace or persecute one race of people. If it is persecution, we don't want it to go under the guise of prosecution."

Leaping to his feet, Bumpus asserted, "The State resents being insulted gratuitously and I ask the Court to strike these remarks from the record."

"Let the record remain as it is," Weaver retorted. "Let us have the truth as to who was beaten by whom, and who is being prosecuted and who is being persecuted."

Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered the remarks stricken, and upon Bumpus' insistence that Weaver be reprimanded, declared:

"Any more such remarks and you will be held in contempt of court."

Judge Ingram also ruled that Bullock could not be questioned further about his alleged beating by Constable T. I. Shaw and a highway patrolman, identified as 'Mr. Smith."

Weaver, however, was allowed to outline what he proposed to develop—that Bullock signed a statement for Bumpus after the riot in order "to get out of that rat hole, and that it could not have been a voluntary statement since he had to sign it to get out of jail."

When Bullock testified that someone fired on his car two miles from town the night of the riot and that he was "whipped" by Shaw and "Mr. Smith" when he visited the city hall to inquire about it, Bumpus objected. Judge Ingram sustained his objection.

"Here is a witness who was hit and beaten and could identify his attackers," Weaver said. 'He volunteered information to the attorney general, but no action has been taken to investigate the matter."

It was at this point that Bumpus "dared" Weaver to "accuse me out of court" and declared he had learned the names of Bullock's attackers "ten minutes ago."

The State's witnesses last Tuesday included three teen-age high school students, who testified under cross examination that they had been summoned from their classes that morning, without warning, told to get into a State police car where a "paper," apparently their subpenas to appear as witnesses, was read to them, and they were then driven to the courthouse.

The three, Horace Snipes, 17, George Robert Watkins, 18, and Audrey Aula Claiborn, testified on questioning by Bumpus and his two associates that on February 25 they heard James (Popeye) Bellenfant, driver of the school bus and a defendant in the trial, tell those in the bus that there was trouble brewing in Columbia and to tell their parents to come into town.

The trouble, they quoted Bellenfact as saying, had been between Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, and a white radio repairman. It was this altercation which later led to the shooting of the policemen, the killing of two colored men held in jail, and the present trial.

One witness, Leon Evans, 25, said patrolmen "knocked me down on the sidewalk and stomped me." When he got to jail, he said, another colored prisoner had been beaten. The officers commented on it and proceeded to "beat me up," he said.

Evans said they were crowded in jail "like sardines in a can" and that he was held until Sunday, after his arrest on Tuesday, although his bond was made Saturday. "They wouldn't let me go until I made a statement to the attorney general," he said. "Then they let me out right away."

Leon A. Ranson, a member of defense counsel, on cross examination asked Evans about his arrest and the behavior of the arresting state police.

"They broke in the door of the Odd Fellows Hall where Evans and four others were hiding. Some had machine guns, some pistols, and one or two sawed-off shotguns. They ordered us out with our hands up, searched us, and as each man came out he was grabbed and thrown down stairs. When I got to the sidewalk I was thrown down and stomped on.

"All the way to the jail, every time your hands dropped an inch they'd make you raise 'em half a mile by beating you on the head. When we got to the jail I don't think any of us missed a lick going in the door."

The judge, commenting on Ransom's charge, said he asked reporters to "disregard" that testimony, "not to mention it in detail because it involves other indictments now pending in Columbia."

Knoxville, Tenn. Journal
Sept. 24, 1946

Negro Says Six Innocent In Shootings

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 23 (AP)—A state witness testified on cross examination today at the Circuit Court trial of 25 Negroes charged with attempted murder in connection with disturbances at Columbia, February 25 that six defendants "could not have possibly been involved" in the shooting of four policemen in the town's Mink Slide.

The witness, Lee Andrew Shyers, a Negro, in answering questions of Asst. Defense Attorney Maurice Weaver, said Paul Miles, Lewis Miles, Eugene Williams and Clarence Brown were with him during the affair" and I didn't see them do any shooting.'

Shyers added that he did not believe Napoleon Stewart, another defendant, could be involved either.

"He was asleep by the (Episcopal) Church when I saw him before the shooting. I heard he slept there all night," Shyers told the court. He testified that he and his brother, Early Shyers, and the four defendants with him went to the home of his cousin, Daisy Lee, shortly before the disturbances broke out and stayed there all night. Two others, Luther and Clifford Edwards, he said, reached the front door of her home at the same time.

The ninth state witness to take the stand since the trial started last Thursday, Shyers testified in answer to questions by Dist. Atty.-Gen. Paul Bumpus that he saw 14 of the defendants "about 15 minutes before the first disturbances" and "11 of them had weapons."

Shyers said he had a rifle.

Nashville, Tenn., Banner
Aug. 8, 1946

Negroes' Trial Opens Tuesday In Lawrence

By DANNY BINGHAM
(BANNER Staff Writer)

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Aug. 8—Twenty-five Negroes facing charges arising from the Columbia race troubles will go on trial in Lawrence Circuit Court here next Tuesday as a result of Judge Joe M. Ingram's decision yesterday afternoon which overruled a second defense motion for a change of venue.

Court will reconvene on Saturday at which time the names of between 400 and 600 prospective jurors will be drawn for the trial which may be delayed briefly by a defense attack on the legality of the jury system in Lawrence County.

Following a stormy two-day hearing on the motion for removal of the case from Lawrenceburg to Nashville, Judge Ingram ruled that the grounds were not well taken and insufficient cause was presented to substantiate the plea.

Following the court's ruling on the change of venue, the defense asked for a six-week's continuance because of the illness of Thurgood Marshall, New York City Negro who is general counsel for the NAACP.

Judge Ingram denied this request pointing out that the defendants are adequately represented by counsel by Looby, Weaver and Dr. L. A. Ransom, Washington, D. C., Negro who is a member of the NAACP's legal staff.

The case was moved here from Maury County when Judge Ingram sustained a defense motion for change of venue on July 2.

The defense attorneys, Maurice Weaver, white Chattanoogan who is a representative of the National Assocition for the Advancement of Colored People, and former CIO attorney, and Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville Negro attorney, who is also a representative of the NAACP, had sought the second removal order because of alleged "undue excitement, prejudice and ill will which resulted from the selection of Lawrenceburg as the scene of the trial, so as to prevent a fair trial for the defendants."

Tuesday was named as the date for the trial's opening after Judge Ingram had consulted defense counsel and Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus who is assisted by Atty. Hugh Todd Shelton, Sr., of Columbia, and Asst. Atty. Gen. William A. Harwell of Lawrenceburg.

Judge Ingram said he would order "not less than 400 or more than 600" names drawn from the jury box Saturday, the exact number to be determined at the time. The Lawrence County jury box was only recently refilled.

This number is expected to be exhausted before a 12-man trial panel is selected in view of the fact that the defense has a total of 212 preemptory challenges, and the State, 112.

During discussions of the number of prospective jurors expected to be required, Judge Ingram asked attorneys on both sides the number they would suggest. Looby refused to state, saying, "I won't say. I want to be in a position to take advantage of any errors that might develop."

This was taken as another of numerous indications that the defense plans to fight the case through higher courts.

Looby also announced in court that the defense might contest the formation of the jury, an act which would further delay the opening of the trial. Although he offered no explanation, the defense is expected to follow the routine carried out in pleas in abatement through which it was charged that the indictment against the defendants was invalid because of the alleged systematic exclusion of Negroes from jury service in Maury County.

Judge Ingram overruled the pleas after about four weeks of litigation.

Hearing Opened Saturday

The hearing on the motion for change of venue from Lawrenceburg was opened Saturday when the defense presented 250 affidavits from residents of Middle Tennessee counties in support of their contention that a fair trial could not be obtained for the defendants in Lawrence or neighboring counties. Sixty-five of the affidavits were from Lawrence County, all signed by Negroes.

In presentation of its case, the defense asked that the trial be moved to Nashville.

The plea for the change centered around the protests registered by Lawrence countians soon after the announcement that the trial had been changed from Coumbia to Lawrenceburg. The defense introduced newspaper reports of the protests, and resolutions adopted by local groups.

In the defense's closing arguments, Looby admitted that the grounds on which the motion was based, must have, under law, occurred since July 2. He attacked Bumpus' purpose in permitting publication of a letter to a citizen of Lawrenceburg concerning the protests over the trial's removal, and charged the attorney general with trying the Negroes in the press. He also charged that the attorney general's popularity in Lawrence County would further prevent an impartial trial for the Negroes.

Bumpus met this charge with the assertion that," since this matter came up, the attorney general is about as popular in Lawrence County as a pole cat would be in a perfume factory."

He cited incidents in which local residents had blamed him for bringing the case here from Maury County where the disorders occurred last February 25-26.

Bumpus argued that the defense had in no way shown that prejudice against the defendants had developed since July 2, and recalled the State's 95 affidavits from Lawrence countians who said they felt that a fair trial could and would be given the Negroes here.

Litigations involving the 25 Negroes who are charged with being accessories before the fact and attempted murder in the first degree, opened in Maury Circuit Court on May 28. At that time the hearing of pleas in abatement was started.

Through this action, the defense attempted to have the indictment quashed on the grounds that Negroes had been systematically excluded from jury service in Maury County. Arguments and testimony in this phase of the litigations continued for four weeks, and was followed by pleas for severance, a plea in misnomer, and finally, the first motion for change of venue which resulted in removal of the case to Lawrenceburg.

Negroes Never on Jury:

300 Testify in Columbia Amid Bitter Tenseness

The Courier Pittsburgh, Pa. Sat. 6-15-46

562

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Amid charges of racial tension being so acute it is impossible for the twenty-five defendants in the Tennessee riot trial to obtain a fair trial, an endless stream of witnesses, nearly 300 of Maury County's 10,000 Negro citizens, paraded to the witness stand to testify they had never been called to jury service as the trial entered its third week.

Defense counsel for the defendants is building up cumulative evidence attacking the legality of indictments returned against the defendants charging conspiracy to commit murder during the race clash in February. Sat. 6-15-46

A highlight during the uneventful week was a surprise defense move to bring into court minutes of the Maury County jury commission and the jury box from which local juries are selected.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The Federal Grand Jury probing the Tennessee riot called as witnesses, last week, Ollie Harrington, Courier cartoonist and NAACP public relations counsel; James A. Neuburger, American Civil Liberties Union. They were belived to have been called to testify regarding facts contained in a pamphlet "The Truth About Columbia, Tenn. Cases," which was widely circulated. Sat. 6-8-46

A bench warrant was issued for Clarence C. Carraway Jr., of Chicago, for failure to answer a grand jury summons.

JUDGE DENIES MOVE

Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram presiding, denied the motion after listening to a heated argument between Attys. Z. Alexander Looby and Thurgood Marshall, and Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus.

When asked for what purpose such an inspection was purposed, Attorney Looby declared: "We allege that not only are there no names of Negroes in the box, but between selection of names and selection of jurors, an unlawful manipulation to exclude Negroes from service on juries take place." Judge Ingram held that bringing the jury box into open court would disqualify the entire group of prospective jurors.

After the pleas of abatement are exhausted, Attorney Marshall revealed that the next defense strategy would be a move for change of venue because the hostility of Maury County residents made it impossible for the defendants to get a fair trial.

BITTER HOSTILITY

Elaborating further, Mr. Marshall said "I have never been in a community so hostile to Negroes as Columbia. It is exceedingly tense."

As examples of the hostility, Mr. Marshall revealed that Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga attorney aiding the defense, had been told that "his body would be found at the bottom of Duck River," and a white man who worked in a Government plant was advised "to leave the community, and he has left." The Courier

The man is said to be able to identify some members of the mob which stormed the jail demanding that Mrs. Gladys Stevenson and her son, James, be turned over to them after a fight with a white radio repairman, which served as a spark to ignite the tension that flared into a race war.

WITNESS IN RESERVE

The white man is being held "on tap" for testimony during the trial.

When asked how long he would continue to summon witnesses to support the pleas in abatement, Mr. Marshall declared "We will keep on calling them until somebody agrees that there are qualified Negroes in the county." Prosecutor Bumpus has refused to admit for the records that Negroes are qualified for jury service in Maury County. Pittsburgh, Pa.

The defense is also attempting to show that "vicious social practices" in Maury County prevent Negroes serving on juries.

TO PROVE VIOLATION

Attorney Weaver declared in court that "there is a vicious segregation of races in Columbia and Negroes are not called for jury service" because they might be compelled to spend the night with white jurors, and they might be forced to eat in the same restaurant with white jurors.

When the prosecution objected to the question of social conditions being put to witnesses, Mr. Weaver answered: Sat. 6-15-46

"We want to prove that segregation exists in Maury County. We will show it would be a violation of the segregation customs if Negro jurors had to eat and sleep with white people. There is a vicious social practice here which prevents Negroes from serving on juries, although the law allows them to do so."

Lynch Threat Told in Court

PM New York, N.Y. Tues. 10-1-46

A defense witness for the 25 Negroes on trial at Lawrenceburg, Tenn., testified yesterday that she had heard lynch threats made by two white men in advance of the racial disorders at Columbia on the night of Feb. 25.

The disorders followed the arrest of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, following an argument with a white radio repairman. Mrs. Hannah Peppers, mother of Mrs. Stephenson, said she heard two men on the public square say: "We are going to take those Negroes out of jail and hang them."

The 25 on trial are charged with an attempt to murder four policemen wounded in fighting that night in the Negro Mink Slide district.

Witnesses produced by the prosecution were unable to establish that any of the defendants were involved in the shooting. The defense has attempted to establish that the Negro section feared a mass lynching and that the police officers were mistaken for members of a mob intent on violence.

TENN. TRIAL DEFENSE WITNESS CLAIMS WHITE MOB WITH GUNS GATHERED BEFORE OFFICERS SHOT

The Black Dispatch

No Proof Given That Those Charged Were Seen in Vicinity When Shooting Occurred

ONE NEGRO KICKED IN "HIP"

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — (NNPA) — Julius Blair 76-year-old political leader and one of twenty-five men charged with taking part in a race riot in Columbia, Tenn. Feb. 25, testified last Friday that he had seen an armed white mob on the public square prior to the disturbance.

Charged with being an accessory to the shooting of Policeman Will Wilsford, Blair said he and other persons decided February 25 to escort James Stephenson, a war veteran, out of town. Stephenson with his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, had been arrested after an altercation with a white radio repairman and released on bail on a charge of attacking the white man.

"The last time I went to the square there was a big crowd of white people and I'd say between twenty-five and fifty guns," Blair told the jury.

Blair said he made bond for said that long before Wilsford and three other policemen were shot in Mink Slide that night he had told officers "the Stephenson bay has been taken out of town and there's no use to have trouble."

Blair said he mdae bond for Mrs. Stephenson and her son, James, because "I heard a mob was growing and I knew the jail was no safe place for anybody."

He said that about thirty minutes before the four policemen were wounded in Mink Slide he closed his poolroom and soda fountain in the area and went home.

"I didn't know about anything that happened until the next morning," he testified. "I never even talked of doing harm to anyone—white or colored."

Blair said he was arrested after the disorder and was not permitted to see any outsiders until late the following day.

Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram earlier overruled a defense motion for a directed verdict of acquittal for the defendants.

"Not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could the defendants be implicated," Attorney Z. Alexander Looby, of Nashville, declared as he presented the motion in the jury's absence.

"The prosecution has only presented evidence that the defendants were seen in Mink Slide prior to the wounding of four police officers," Mr. Looby argued. "There hasn't been a single witness to say any of the defendants had a weapon at the time of the shooting."

Looby pointed out that "a great many of these defendants have not even been mentioned by (State) witnesses."

On application by Defense Attorney Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga, Judge Ingram recessed court from midmorning until the afternoon to give the defense additional time to prepare its case. The State rested at 10 o'clock last Thursday night.

Leon A. Ransom, of Washington, D. C., chief defense counsel, asked for a recess until Saturday, but Judge Ingram refused, saying that night sessions would be held until further notice to speed proceedings.

The State closed its case with testimony and exhibits intended to prove that the four policemen who were shot February 25 when they entered Mink Slide were plainly visible. The defense contends that colored people in the area were alarmed over "racial feelings" and mistook the officers for a mob.

Presentation of the State's case required a week, but six weeks were needed to select the all-white jury hearing the evidence.

Weaver sought to show in court Thursday that State police helped to destroy property in the Mink Slide area when the disorders broke out.

The chief witness for the State at last Thursday's session was Lynn Bemar, state patrol commissioner, and former All-American end on the Vanderbilt football team. He said he and his men surrounded the Mink Slide area on the night of February 25 when four policemen were shot there, and rounded up more than 100 colored persons the next morning.

Under cross-examination, he admitted that he and his men entered the house of James Morton, one of the defendants, without a search warrant ,and found eleven colored persons and some fifteen shotguns, pistols and rifles and a quantity of ammunition.

Judge Ingram instructed the jury to forget parts of this testimony because Bomar's entrance without a warrant was "unlawful." At the same time, the judge permitted testimony to stand that the Bomar raiding party found firearms concealed in the house.

Under cross-examination by Mr. Weaver, Bomar lost his temper on the witness stand. In reply to a query as to whether he had anything against any of the defendants, he snapped: "I have some very good friends among the colored race, and I have more respect for any member of the colored race than I have for you. You went to Columbia and agitated this thing."

Mr. Looby protested to the court. Judge Ingram refused to strike Bomar's outburst from the record, but did warn both sides to refrain from personalities.

Bomar admitted that he kicked one colored man while arresting him and held another on the floor by keeping one foot on the prisoner's neck.

His admission came when Weaver asked: "Were any witnesses in this case intimidated? Did you see patrolmen strike Negroes with blackjacks on their way to the jail?"

Bomar replied: "Witnesses were not intimidated. I did not see any policeman hit any. I hit two Negroes myself, but not with a blackjack. I kicked one and put my foot on the neck of the other."

In amplifying this he said the one he "kicked" or, as he amended it, "booted in the hip with my knee," was slow in putting his hands up" and "very sullen about it."

"The other one," Bomar said, "was in jail when the two Negroes were killed and a deputy sheriff wounded after one of the Negroes grabbed a rifle and started shooting. When I came into the room one of my men said he had tried to grab his piltol from his holster. So I grabbed him by the coat, another policeman threw him to the floor, and I put my foot on his neck and told him if he tried to get up I would kill him."

Bomar denied on earlier cross-examination that his men were responsible for the looting and vandalism during or after a dawn raid in Mink Slide the morning after the shooting of the four city policemen.

Mr. Looby last Wednesday charged that C. Hayes Denton, State witness, "was an investigator and had actually participated in the lynching of Carter Creek, Maury county Negro, in 1933."

Mr. Looby made his accusation after the jury had been removed from the court room.

Another State witness, Patrolman G. F. Collins, of Columbia, said the racial conflict was apparently touched off by rumors that unidentified white men had purchased a coil of rope.

Mr. Collins testified amid attempts by Looby to connect the February trouble with Columbia lynchings of former years.

Collins said he saw Mead Johnson, one of the defendants, armed with a shotgun about an hour before the policemen were shot. He testified that Johnson told him:

"I'm glad you came by. We heard there had been a rope bought at a hardware store and that there is danger of lynching."

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Tennessee Trial Nears Climax

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Wed. 10-2-46

(56a) Civilian

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Oct. 1.—The historic trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes moved swiftly today toward a dramatic finale. Nearly all the evidence is in. More than two score witnesses have told their stories. Yet there is no art by which the courtroom observer can venture to foretell the legal climax that lies just ahead.

Running through thousands of pages of court record like a red line from a pen dipped in blood, are tales of two grisly Maury County lynchings, one in 1927, another in 1933.

LYNCH THAT FAILED

There is the recounting of an attempted repeat performance on Feb. 25, 1946. But the testimony shows that James Stephenson, 19-year-old Negro, a Navy veteran, intended victim of this most recent mob rampage, is alive in Detroit today because the Negroes went to their homes, turned out the lights, a few standing guard in the darkened street with hunting guns, while others whisked him to safety and placed him on a Chicago-bound train.

In that court record is the honest testimony of 76-year-old Julius Blair, leader of the Negro community. It tells how he took Stephenson and the sailor's mother out of the county jail on bond shortly before the mob stormed the prison doors demanding their surrender.

The court record also shows the state of mind of the Negro community that night before shots were fired and four white policemen were wounded. It shows that the Negroes knew present Columbia officials had marched in earlier lynch mobs. And they did not trust their safety to these men or those under them.

It shows officials had been told by Negro leaders that white men should stay out of the Jimcrow district that night. It shows that policemen, instead of dispersing and disarming the white mob, moved into the darkened Eighth Street colored business district. There they were met with gunfire.

NO PROOF

But there is not one iota of proof in all the bulky court record that any of the 25 defendants charged with attempt to commit murder fired a single shot.

These are the simple facts culled from long days of testimony. And it is reasonable to assume that, in consideration of these facts, a fair court of law would dismiss the defendants and send them home instanter.

But the Circuit Court of Lawrence County is a Jimcrow institution.

All eyes, therefore, are on the jury—a merchant, a sawmill operator, a chemical engineer, two carpenters and seven farmers. Their background is that of most southern white men holding tight to the white supremacy theory.

JUDGE VERSUS JUSTICE

Some fair-minded men in Lawrenceburg express belief that one, two or more men of this rural jury may rise up against the age-old oppression of the southern Negro and force a surprise and just decision.

But roly-poly Judge M. Ingram, who rules the court, has made these hopeful observations very optimistic.

By menacing denunciations of defense counsel Z. A. Looby, Maurice Weaver and Dr. Leon A. Ransom, the latter two of whom he cited for "contempt," he has created an atmosphere extremely hostile to the defense.

Judge Ingram's outbursts against defendants and Negro witnesses alike have been bigoted and blind. He has contrived to violate hundreds of principles of law to cover up crimes of state patrolmen, who, witnesses revealed, had roamed the Columbia Negro district like brigands. He has been friendly to Ku Kluxers who appeared as prospective jurors; polite and agreeable to the colorless Prosecutor Paul Bumpus, who defended the Klansmen. He has been touchy and fretful when contradicted by the defense.

DEFENSE GAGGED

Judge Joe M. Ingram has barred large sections of testimony, shutting out from the jury considerable true light shed on the case on the defense. Photographic evidence of pillaging of the Negro community by state patrolmen were barred from the jury's eyes by court ruling. He has not permitted the full story of brutal beatings of Negroes in jail, the shooting to death of two, the connection of a state witness and official to the 1933 lynching to be told to the 12 men charged with deciding the verdict.

Twenty-five innocent Negroes have their eyes glued on the 12 while men in the jury box in Lawrence County Court today. And it is said that eyesight is the most important of man's physical senses, extending the scope of perception beyond all other senses. But not a single defendant, not a single observer at this trial, has been able to penetrate into the secret mind of those 12 men. 10-2-46

What will the verdict be? Will democratic justice prevail? Has a Negro the right to defend himself against a lynch mob in Tennessee?

Witnesses Conflict In Race Riot Trial

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala.

Judge Rules Defendant Cannot Testify

56a Civilian

LAWRENCEBURG, TENN., Sept. 24.—(AP)—In a circuit court session highlighted by flaring tempers of counsel, state "hostile" witnesses, today told conflicting stories on direct and cross examination in the trial of 25 Columbia Negroes for participation in last February's racial disorders. Wed. 9-25-46

Argument between defense Attorney Maurice Weaver and Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus over testimony of witness Alexander Bullock, Negro, led Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram to rule that Bullock could not be questioned further about his alleged beating by constable T. I. Shaw and a highway patrolmen, "Mr. Smith."

Weaver, however, was allowed to outline what he proposed to develop—that Bullock signed a statement for Bumpus after the disturbance in order "to get out of that rat hole, and that it could not have been a voluntary statement since he had to sign it to get out of jail."

The Bullock statement, which Bumpus read into the record, quoted John McKivens and Bob Gentry, two defendants, as saying "we did some shooting down there, and I think we shot an officer" and "we shot out a light" in Mink Slide during the disturbance.

On cross examination by Weaver, Bullock said some of the remarks in the signed statement were "untrue" and denied having quoted McKivens and Gentry.

Tenn. Judge Holds Defense Lawyers in Contempt of Court

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Thurs. 9-19-46

56a Civilian

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 18.—Dr. Leon A. Ransom and Maurice M. Weaver, defense attorneys in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes, were held in contempt of court today by an angry trial judge.

Judge Joe M. Ingram fined the two lawyers $25 each as they stepped into the courtroom 25 minutes late.

Ransom explained the lateness was caused by a tire blowout on the automobile carrying them from Nashville.

Ingram had threatened earlier to hold the defense lawyers in contempt when they clashed with him on legal matters.

Raymond Dunn, 30-year-old truck driver, was selected today as alternate juror. Defense counsel objected to the seating of Dunn, charging the venireman had been insufficiently examined on matters of opinion, race prejudice and law.

JURY READY

A jury of 12 men and one alternate were in the box at noon, exactly five weeks and two days after the first venireman was called for examination.

Theodore Hillhouse, who testified he was a Ku Klux Klan member during the Alfred E. Smith Presidential campaign, would have been the 13th juror if Ransom had not exercised a peremptory challenge.

Judge Ingram qualified this Klansman as a juror. Assistant District Attorney Hugh Shelton accepted Hillhouse, who was eyeing the alternate juror's seat with an air of hope. He lost his chance to sit in judgment of the Negroes when Ransom said: "We'll excuse him peremptorily."

Other veniremen, who testified they knew persons who went to Columbia when a lynch mob sought a Negro Navy veteran and his mother, were likewise qualified by Ingram and removed by the defense.

At least 10 of the veniremen questioned for the alternate's post declared deep prejudice against Negroes. Judge Ingram declared them "qualified" when they testified they could give "justice."

District Attorney Bumpus announced he would introduce the first witnesses for the prosecution tomorrow morning.

TRIAL VEXES PRIDE IN COLUMBIA, TENN.

Times New York, N.Y.

Little Racial Tension Is Seen on Surface on Eve of the Change-of-Venue Hearing

7-1-46 Mon.

OUTSIDE AID IS RESENTED

Prosperous County Confused by Shooting Repercussions—Put Faith in Slow Gains

By **HAROLD B. HINTON**

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 30—On the surface, racial tensions generated Feb. 25-26 by what is locally called "the Columbia incident" appear to have abated today. The twenty-five negro defendants, charged with assault to commit murder, with being accessory before and after the fact, and with lesser offenses, will argue, through counsel, their motion for change of venue tomorrow.

Most of the white residents would like to see the trial transferred to Nashville, Pulaski or some other Tennessee city. As a practical matter, the more experienced of them foresee the greatest difficulty in obtaining a trial jury. It would be a rare resident of Columbia and its surroundings who, by now, has not formed some idea of the guilt or innocence of at least one of the twenty-five defendants. Mon. 7-1-46

On the other hand, their civic and regional pride makes them resent such a motion when offered by attorneys representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the ground that prejudice would make a fair trial impossible.

When the twenty-five Negroes were arrested, following the shooting of four policemen, each of them immediately asked for the help of his favorite white man, and a number of the proposed assistants were lawyers. However, the Negro leaders suggested that they wait until Maurice Weaver, a white lawyer from Chattanooga, arrived on behalf of the association.

Mr. Weaver took charge, until the arrival of Thurgood Marshall, Negro lawyer from New York, who is now chief counsel. He and Mr. Weaver are assisted by Z. Alexander Looby and Dr. L. A. Ransom, Negro lawyers from Nashville.

Setting Is a Proud Community

To understand the resentment of the white community against these well-intentioned efforts of outsiders, it is necessary to know a little of the background of Maury (pronounced "Murray") County. It is a prosperous, proud and cultured community of 43,000 inhabitants. Many families have lived in the county for a hundred and fifty years, their Tennessee forebears having come out from Virginia to take advantage of the land grants Congress voted to Revolutionary War veterans.

It has some of the finest farm land in the United States, made fruitful by great deposits of phosphates lying close to the surface.

Of late years, the economy of Maury County has become diversified along the lines experts usually recommend for the whole South, with the result that it is almost depression-proof. On its rich farming land it grows tobacco, corn and wheat, on its poorer land, it pastures dairy cattle. It has several textile mills of medium size, besides a half-dozen large plants which make either chemicals or fertilizers out of the abundant phosphate deposits.

This is no tobacco road. Maury County has no sharecroppers, in the bad sense of the word. Its tenant farmers are prosperous and respected citizens.

Many Negroes Own Homes

The Negroes of Maury County are prosperous, on the average, as compared with the Negroes in the purely agricultural areas of Tennessee. Many of them own their own homes.

School attendance is compulsory for Negroes and whites to the age of 16. White and Negro teachers draw the same salaries. The Negro high school in Columbia is overcrowded, and a new one is to be built.

Yesterday, the typical Saturday afternoon crowds, equally divided between shoppers and loafers, milled about the courthouse in the main square. About a quarter of the visitors in the square were Negroes, and they gave no visible evidence of being in fear of their lives. They behaved as Negroes in little Southern towns normally behave on Saturday afternoons—joking with each other, and occasional white friends, sitting on the courthouse lawn, and shopping more than ever before in stores formerly catering only to white clientele. The pressure of shortages has operated to end shopping segregation.

A walk in the sun through Mink Slide, where the shooting affray took place in February, revealed no remaining traces of the violence of that night.

Mink Slide is a typical Negro business district that could be duplicated anywhere in the South, in a city of 14,000, which is Columbia's population. It is a block long, and begins only a block from the courthouse square. There is a large farm implement store, an undertaking establishment, and a brick church on one side. On the other, there is a four-story brick building, housing a fraternal order, with offices rented out to Negro doctors on the lower floors. The rest of that side of the block is occupied by a row of one-story shops (mostly restaurants, cafes and little stores) and a frame church.

It was from this row of one-story shops that came the fusillade of shots which wounded the four city policemen on the night of Feb. 25.

Difficulty in Fixing Guilt

The twenty-five defendants, the white people believe, include the man, or the men, who shot those policemen (who did not return the fire—they were apparently unarmed) and they want the guilty man, or men, punished. They say they would equally desire the punishment of white men who shot peace officers in pursuit of their duty.

Fatalistically, the people with whom I talked realized the diffisiculty of pinning legal guilt on any individuals in such a crowd of defendants.

These are only some of the reasons why the thinking white population of Columbia is embarrassed at the national prominence given to their sad experience. They are especially irked at the charges that the negroes could not get a fair trial here (except for the difficulty of choosing a jury of twelve men able to say they had no preconceived notions about any of the twenty-five defendants four months after the sensation event).

The white citizens who are most resentful of outside advice and counsel on their racial problems are the first to concede that social equality for Negroes does not exist in Maury County. They point, however, to the political equality (there is no important intimidation of Negro voters in Tennessee, even in Democratic primaries) and to the equality of economic opportunity which, they insist exist here.

What worries the more serious-thinking white people here is the (to them) surprising fact that a prior arrangement appears to have existed among the male Negro population as to tactics to be employed in case of emergency. Among the defendants are Negroes who live several miles out of town.

By some grapevine, these rural Negroes got word that trouble was brewing early on the night of Feb. 25 in time to collect arms and get to Mink Slide for the uphappy events of that night. Mon. 7-1-46

The puzzlement of the white menhere is heightened by an interval of twenty years without serious racial troubles. They had begun to believe that slow, evolutionary processes were succeeding.

The impression given is one of bewilderment that this thing could have happened in their supposedly happy prosperous community As they see it, the trivial incident which started it (a dispute between a Negro woman of fine reputation and her son, on one side, and a white employe, who happened to be sheriff-elect of the county, of a large store reputedly owned by Northern interests) could have happened anywhere in the country.

The findings of the Southern Regional Conference have been read only sketchily here. This report, which seems to be the only objective, unbiased account of the "incident" yet published, found faults on both sides, but defined the faults as those of human nature under stress of great excitement, and steered clear of the abstract question of civil liberties, so difficult to assess when bullets are flying.

The man who took me to see Mink Slide, with its Saturday afternoon affluence, called attention to the fact that automobiles were parked fender to fender and that every establishment open to business was jammed. He wanted to know whether I considered those laughing, obviously prosperous Negroes as victims of a brutal, calculated system of economic repression.

The answer was obviously in the negative, on the evidence cited, and we rejoined the original conference. As it was breaking up, a new participant arrived with a news agency report of a threatened lynching in Tyler, Tex.

"Maybe you had better go to Texas," said one of the group. "We haven't lynched anybody here in twenty years."

ACQUITTAL URGED IN TENNESSEE CASE

The New York Times

Lawyer for 25 Negroes Blames 'White Mob'—Prosecutor Stresses 'Fair Trial'

New York, N.Y.
Thurs. 10-3-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Oct. 2 (AP)—Leon A. Ransom of Washington, counsel for twenty-five Negroes on trial for racial disorders in Columbia, Tenn., last February, opened defense arguments today before the all-white jury trying the defendants accused of attempt to commit murder or with being accessories in the wounding of four Columbia policemen in the Mink Slide business section. He blamed "a white mob" for the disorder.

"Those men up on the square were responsible," said Mr. Ransom, employe of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "The colored people in the Mink Slide were afraid—they had a right to be afraid. Any normal human being would have done the same thing they did under similar circumstances."

"If you men believe in lynching then bring in a verdict of guilty," Mr. Ransom told the jury, "but if you believe that lynching is undemocratic and something that will tear down our American way of life, then I ask you to bring in a verdict of not guilty."

The assistant State's attorney, William A. Harwell Jr., told the jury that "no one has the right to arm himself in self defense and mow down duly constituted officers."

Tenn. Defense Scores Gag Rule; Judge Rages

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Fri. 9-6-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 5.—Judge Joe M. Ingram angrily reprimanded defense attorneys today in the trial of the Columbia Negroes, when they sought to challenge the speedup system imposed by the court in examination of prospective jurors.

"Except and sit down" the Judge shouted at Maurice Weaver, defense lawyer, when the latter arose to enter his exception in the court record.

"Get on your feet when addressing the court," Ingram barked a few minutes later at Dr. Leon A. Ransom, attorney of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People.. Ransom, squeezed between his chair and the defense table, was slow in arising on a point of law. Fri. 9-6-46

But the two defense attorneys, denied by the court's unprecedented ruling from questioning veniremen on race prejudice and law, did get their objections into the records.

"Let the records show we are forbidden to challenge a venireman for cause because of the court's limitation of examination," Weaver declared.

J. A. Jordan, Lawrence County farmer, was selected this afternoon as the sixth juror.

Judge Ingram has been bearing down hard on Weaver, lone white lawyer for defense, from the outset. The court threatened to jail Weaver yesterday for contempt when the latter entered the first objection against being limited in examination of veniremen.

The court's rebuke to Dr. Ransom was seen as a warning that the judge will permit no examination of any kind by counsel into social opinions of prospective jurors.

Ransom was stopped by the court when the attorney sought to quiz F. E. Anthony, a saw mill boss about "trouble" the latter said he had with Negroes.

Anthony replied **"you usually have trouble with colored labor."**

"No more questions on race," the judge barked. **"I have no recourse but to excuse this man peremptorily because I know what he believes,"** Ransom replied.

Knoxville, Tenn. Journal
Sept. 27, 1946

Lynn Bomar Testifies At Racial Trial

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 26 (AP)—Tennessee Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar testified today at the trial of 25 Negroes on racial disorders charges that "I put my foot on the neck" of a Negro held in jail the morning after the racial trouble at Columbia, Tenn., last February.

Bomar made that statement on cross-examination by defense attorney Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga after he had told attorney General Paul F. Bumpus that no threats were made against any prisoners held as a result of the racial flareup.

Bomar added "I booted another Negro in the hip with my feet when we were taking him to jail."

"Why did you strike this Negro?" Weaver asked.

"He was sullen. He didn't raise his hands when I told him to and I didn't want to get shot like the four policemen," Bomar replied.

Four Columbia patrolmen were wounded when they walked into the Mink Slide Quarter February 25 after a day of racial tension

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Knoxville, Tenn. Journal
Sept. 26, 1946

Judge Bans Lynching Testimony

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept 25 (AP)—Circuit Judge Joe Ingram today, overruled a motion by defense attorney Z. Alexander Looby to introduce the "lynchings of two Negroes in Maury County" several years ago at the trial of 25 Negroes on charges growing out of the February racial disorders in Columbia, Tenn.

Judge Ingram ruled those indictments had no bearing on the Columbia disturbances and said he did not think it was proper to introduce such testimony at this time.

The motion was offered by Looby as the trial entered its sixth day and as former Maury County Sheriff J. J. Underwood prepared to take the stand again.

Tenn. Judge Rules White Jury Okay

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 19.—Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram, after hearing dramatic testimony for four full weeks on the exclusion of Negroes from jury service, today overruled the defense plea to abate the "attempt to murder" indictments of the Columbia Negroes.

The court likewise turned down a second plea by attorneys for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People that 25 of the indicted Negroes be given separate trials.

Thurs. 6-20-46

The defendants—ten of them war veterans and leading members of the Negro community—have been ordered by the Judge's decision to stand trial here in a tense lynch-like atmosphere. Charges against against them grew out of a heroic armed defense Feb. 25 against a white mob's attempt to lynch James Stephenson, a Navy veteran, and his mother. Five white policemen were wounded in the struggle. Two Negroes were shot to death in jail by highway patrolmen. New York.

The defendants filed out of the hot courtroom at noon to return Monday when four defense lawyers will launch a fight for a change of venue.

Maurice Weaver, white attorney for the defense, told the court he needed the rest of the week to prepare testimony.

NAACP attorneys are preparing a mass of evidence showing the lives of defense attorneys, defendants and friends of the defense have been openly threatened here. They will aim to show racial tension and Ku Klux Klan activity is so widespread in Maury Country that it would be impossible to pick an impartial jury to try the case.

Weaver said the defense will produce large quantities of documented affidavits to show the cards are stacked against the defendants. They plan to introduce newspaper reports of the Columbia lynch spirit. Many witnesses, both white and Negro, are being called to testify in the change of venue plea.

In throwing out the defense plea of abatement, Judge Ingram laid the base for the most significant mass trial of Negroes in the South's postwar history.

Ten thousand Negroes in Maury County have rallied behind their Negroes in the Columbia and Nash- community leaders. Thousands of ville are joining the NAACP, building mass branches of the organization as a basis for an uncompromising fight against Dixie jimcrow.

The whole Negro community is talking about the coming big meeting planned to be held soon in the Negro community's largest meeting place where a local NAACP charter will be presented with proper ceremony. Thurs. 6-20-46

In ruling against the plea of abatement today, Judge Ingram ignored testimony of 223 witnesse who told of the Jimcrow jury system that brought in the indictment against the local Negroes.

Judge Ingram based his decision on state testimony that during the last 50 years 10 Negroes had been summoned for jury service in the county. The testimony showed, however, none of these ever served as jurors. New York.

Judge Ingram ruled the all-white grand jury that indicted the Negroes was "duly impaneled according to law."

Thurgood Marshall, chief NAACP counsel, indicated he was trying the case with an eye on U. S. Supreme Court decisions on similar cases.

He rose quickly following the Judge's ruling and insisted the Judge make the record show his decision implies **"there has been no denial of constitutional rights of the defendants."**

Marshall announced he was flying back to New York to confer on the case. He has also been asked to make the main report on the struggle for civil rights at the forthcoming convention of the National Lawyers Guild in Cleveland.

Southern Paper Hits U.S. Jury OK Of Tenn. Terror

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Special to the Daily Worker

LOUISVILLE, Ky., June 21.—The influential conservative **Louisville Courier-Journal** denounced the Nashville Tenn., Federal Grand Jury for its whitewash of "the unlawful search and seizure by State Patrolmen" in Columbia, Tenn., Feb. 25.

The **Courier-Journal** declared that there was **"plain evidence"** of violations of the civil rights of Negroes, and that the **"whitewash covers up (the) community's failure."** Sat.

The editorial rebuked the Grand Jury for its failure to note that the Negroes had good reason to lock themselves into their homes, and a **"natural distrust for the intentions of their professed defenders, the policemen,"** recalling that there had been **"two lynchings of Negroes, one actually on the court house steps, in the recent memory of Mink Sliders (residents of Columbia's Negro section).** 6-22-46

Instead of noting these violations of civil rights and the background of lynch violence, the **Courier-Journal** continued, **"the Grand Jury labored the wholly irrelevant point that 'the Communist press' and inflammatory writers and outside organizations had concerned themselves with the incident. What this had to do with the fact that officers of the law moved against Negroes locked in their neighbor' homes, rather than against a crow of whites that milled around Min Slide, is hard to see.** 6-22-46

"It is not enough to insist piously as did the Grand Jury, that white people and Negroes 'sincerely desire to live together in peace and harmony.' In the South more than anywhere else in the country a community has the obligation to prove this desire. . . . It must be proved by rebuke and punishment for irresponsibles. . . .

"The Grand Jury, in short, could well have taken these truths into account, rather than huffing 'Communists.'

NEGRO TRIAL SHIFT CALLED NECESSARY

Counsel for 25 in Tennessee Held for Murder Attempt Says County Is Biased

Times

Thurgood Marshall, chief counsel for twenty-five Negroes now on trial in Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee, for attempted murder and inciting other individuals to murder as the result of a clash between whites and Negroes in February, revealed yesterday that he was going to move for a change of venue. He said the hostility of the white residents of Maury County made it impossible for the defendants to get a fair trial there.

Mr. Marshall, who flew here from Tennessee for the day, held an interview in the office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 20 West Fortieth Street, of which he is special counsel. 6-9-46

Tells of "Tense" Town

Declaring that he never had seen a community so "hostile" to Negroes, he described Columbia today as exceedingly tense and said "one good example is that we commute from Nashville to Columbia, a 90-mile round trip each day."

Asked if he had the protection of the police he answered, "They destroyed the Negro community. They slapped the Negroes around. They killed the two Negroes who were in jail. And I most certainly don't want them to protect me."

He said that although he had not been threatened Maurice Weaver, a Chattanooga attorney, who went to Columbia when the Negroes were arrested, had been told that "his body would be found at the bottom of Duck River." N.Y.

Threat to Witness Charged

Also threatened, he said, was a white man who worked in a Government plant and who could have identified some of the men in a mob that stormed the prison demanding that Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, a Navy veteran, who had been arrested after a fight with William Fleming, a radio repairman, be handed over to them. "He was advised to leave the community and he has left," said Mr. Marshall, adding, "We have him on tap." 6-9-46

Mr. Marshall said that the grand juries in Maury County have never included Negroes and that he was now calling to court Negroes who were qualified for jury service under the law. To date 200 have been called, he reported, out of a colored population of 10,000 in the county.

"We're going to keep on calling them until somebody agrees that there are qualified Negroes in the county," he said.

NEGROES, WHITES INDICT LILY-WHITE JURY SYSTEM

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., May 31.—It is becoming clearer every hour to the shirt-sleeved spectators packed in the little Maury County courtroom here today that the real defendant in the trial of 31 leading Negro citizens on a charge of "attempt to murder" is the State of Tennessee.

Attorneys for the 31, in a preliminary plea to outlaw the indictment, have maneuvered District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus into the position of defense counsel for a social system of Jimcrow discrimination and second-class citizenship for Negroes

DRAMATIC PARADE

More than 50 Negro citizens of Maury County, all of them property owners and taxpayers, formed a dramatic parade to the witness stand, testifying men of their race have been systematically barred from serving on juries.

One witness, the Rev. James West, after qualifying as an expert on social problems, told how his people are being unjustly separated socially as "inferiors" from the rest of the population. This brought Bumpus and his two assistants to their feet. New York, N.Y.

"This is a legal trial and not a forum for social problems," he cried.

He fought vainly to eliminate damaging evidence of the Jimcrow system from the record.

NEGRO COUNSEL FIGHTS BACK

Z. Alexander Looby, chief defense counsel of this history-making case, leaped into the fray. The court room was silent. All eyes turned toward the fighting Negro lawyer. 6-1-46

"The liberty of these people is at stake," he told the court.

"Social customs are an important element in this case. We say for a half century Negroes have been denied their rights in this country. We want to expedite the case. But we will stay here a year if necessary to protect the rights of these people."

Looby continued to question the witness. After being told by Judge Joe M. Ingram to **"try to stick to jury issue,"** he asked the Rev. West: **"You look around in this courtroom and tell me if Negroes are segregated here."** Sat.

JIMCROW IN COURTROOM

"Yes, that's true," the clergyman replied, scanning spectators segregated into "white" and "colored" seats.

"That hasn't anything to do with the case," barked Bumpus.

The Judge interjected: **"I think we've had enough of this."**

But Looby would not be silenced. **"I want to show the conditions in this court,"** he said.

"Isn't Attorney Looby sitting there between two white men?" asked the District Attorney with a broad gesture. He pointed to Maurice Weaver, lone white attorney for the defense, and a white court attendant flanking the chief counsel. **"And that white man to the left,"** said Looby proudly, **"is one of the attorneys for the defense."**

Negroes in the gallery shook the room with their applause and laughter.

BOMBSHELL

A bombshell was thrown into today's afternoon session when defense attorneys called elderly and dignified County Judge W. C. Whitthorne to testify to his knowledge of Negroes serving on Maury County juries.

He said to his knowledge no Negro had served on a Maury County jury since 1901. He has been a lawyer and judge in this town since 1888. One Negro did serve as a juror between 1898 and 1901, the judge testified. But this happened, he said, when magistrates picked the jury panel. At that time two Negroes were elected as magistrates. One of them placed himself on the jury list in an attempt to smash the tradition of discrimination.

The state is making much of

COLUMBIA, Tenn., May 31 (UP). — District Attorney Paul E. Bumpus declared he was determined to avoid another Dayton, Tenn., "monkey trial."

Columbia is 150 miles from Dayton, where the famous Scopes trial in 1926 pitted Williams Jennings Bryan against Clarence Darrow in a courtroom battle over the right to teach evolution.

testimony of Prof. Thomas Caruthers, Negro biology teacher who said he was called for jury duty two of three years ago.

The professor told the court he thought it was odd his name was called. He said he went to the sheriff, feeling there was some "misunderstanding," and withdrew and never served.

All day witnesses, life-long residents of the county, told how none of their people had ever served on juries. There were overalled farmers, workmen with calloused hands, grocers, teachers.

Dignified, grey-bearded Robert Johnson, 86, told the court he was a property owner in the county since 1885. **"I never knew of a Negro serving as a juror here,"** he said. 6-1-46

WHAT IS WHITE

Kirby Patrick, farmer with skin lighter than many so-called white men in the room, was asked: **"Are you a white man or a Negro?"**

"You'll have to figure that out yourself," he said. There was laughter. The judge called for order. Patrick said he was classified as a Negro. Saturday

The defendants, seated in three rows, watched the proceedings carefully. Their brown eyes shifted from the witness stand to the judge, to the lawyers. But there is optimism in their dark faces.

They all face 20-year prison terms if convicted. But defendants I have talked to during the past two days know growing support is behind the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, which is financing the defense.

WHITES DIVIDED

And 30,225 white people in Maury County are seriously concerned with this case, lining up on one side or the other. The county's 10,130 Negroes have only one side—the side that is fighting to save the 31 from imprisonment. Total population of the county is 40,357. 6-1-46

If necessery, Looby told the court as it adjourned at 3 p.m. to reconvene Monday, the defense will call every Negro in the county who is qualified to serve on a jury.

PROVE JURY COLOR BAR; RESIST MASS RAILROADING

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., May 30.—The right of Negroes to serve as jurors is the first major issue being thrashed out here as the trial of 30 leading Negro citizens on charges of "attempt to commit murder" moved slowly through the preliminaries. 5-31-46

Seated on hard wooden benches in Maury County Courthouse, 25 of the 30 listen with keen apprehension as a battery of attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People battle to save them from long prison terms.

Trial of the Negroes is the outgrowth of an attempt of a mob to lynch James Stephenson, 19-year-old navy veteran, and his mother, Feb. 25. The lynching was narrowly averted by the Negroes themselves. Five policemen, including the local chief of police, were slightly wounded by buckshot when the Negroes took up arms in defense of their community.

JIMCROW THE CRIMINAL

A. Alexander Looby, the Southland's outstanding Negro attorney and chief counsel for the defense, wastes no time coming to grips with the central issue of the case. It is a typical system of Jimcrow, he insists, that must stand accused of crime before the court. 5-31-46

Looby, who addresses the court in a quiet Haitian accent, is ably assisted in his arguments by Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, CIO attorney and the only white man in the defense battery. Other defense counselors are Thurgood Marshall, general counsel for NAACP, and Dr. L. A. Ransom. New York

This morning the defense began examination of the first of 85 witnesses, including members of the grand jury that indicted the 30 Negroes. Looby will ask Judge Joe M. Ingram to quash the indictments on grounds the defendants were illegally indicted because of systematic barring of Negroes from jury duty.

This preliminary plea of abatement action is expected to continue through most of this week.

BLAME POLICE

The defense theory of the case is that members of the State Highway Patrol, who shot up and wrecked every Negro business establishment on East Eighth St. following the Feb. 25 mob threats, should be standing trial here today.

The white men who marked a two-foot KKK on a casket in the funeral parlor of James Morton, local undertaker, should be in the prisoners dock, NAACP lawyers claim. Morton, however, is one of the defendants. So is Julius Blair, 75-year-old Negro drugstore operator. His store was wrecked and looted by rampaging high way patrolmen. 5-31-46

Among the 25 defendants seated on the hard benches are Blair's son, Solomon, a barber. His shop was wrecked during the raid on the Negro community. Thirty-six .45-caliber bullets were fired through his front windows and door.

BEREAVED ON TRIAL

Also seated among the accused is Mead Johnson, store owner. His store, too, was wrecked. His son, James Johnson, was shot to death in jail following the raid.

Another defendant is Horace Gordon, brother of William Gordon, a second man shot down and killed by state police bullets while being questioned in the Maury County Jail.

Also among the defendants is the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, Baptist clergyman and carpenter. One of the defendants, Tommy Baxter, will never stand trial. He fell sick from bad jail treatment and died. Five of the accused Negroes have not yet been called for trial. They are James Stephenson and his mother, charged with felonious assault, and William Pillow, Lloyd Kennedy and John Blackwell, charged with assault with attempt to commit murder. N.Y. N.Y.

SEEKS MASS TRIAL

Attorney General Paul Bumpus is demanding all the 25 defendants on the first indictment on the "attempt to murder" charges be tried en masse, NAACP counsel argues that the cases be separated and the defendants be tried one at a time.

Meanwhile, considerable attention has been directed to federal grand jury proceedings on the case in Nashville. New York, N.Y.

That jury has called the historian Carl Van Doren to testify Monday. Van Doren is a leading member of an NAACP committee for defense of the Columbia defendants.

Local newspapers make it appear Van Doren, and not the perpetrators of the violence here, is to be under investigation.

Columbia Trial Witnesses Rap All-White Jury

Defender

Chicago, Ill.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The trial of 28 Negroes on charges growing out of the Columbia riot of Feb. 26 was highlighted this week by the testimony of 48 witnesses called to prove systematic exclusion of Negroes from Maury County jury services for more than 50 years.

According to Z. Alexander Looby of this city, one of the three attorneys assigned by the NAACP, there are 60 more witnesses scheduled to testify.

These persons are being questioned to prove the defense contention that qualified Negroes in the county where Columbia is located have been barred from jury service through "manipulation of jury lists." 6-8-46

Witnesses Testify

Serving with Looby are Leon A. Ransom, former Howard law school professor; Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the NAACP; and Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga.

All except one of the witnesses testified that they had never heard of colored persons being called for jury duty in Maury County.

One witness, Thomas Carruthers, school teacher, said he had been called once for jury service about a year ago in his 50 years' residence in Columbia. He stated that he considered it a "mistake" and asked to be excused. The sheriff excused him, Carruthers said.

Another, Loraine Morton, said his nephew, James Morton, mortician, had been summoned in a panel several years ago, but was not placed on the jury.

During the questioning of one of the witnesses, District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus, charged the NAACP with attempting to make another "monkey law" case out of the trial. He referred to the trial of John T. Scopes 21 years ago at nearby Dayton, Tenn., on a charge of violating state law by teaching the theory of evolution in the public schools.

Bumpus' outburst came as the defense questioned Maury County Criminal Judge W. C. Whitthorne, 80, member of the Maury County Bar since 1888. NAACP Attorney Weaver had drawn from Whitthorne testimony that between 1898 and 1901 grand jurors were selected by the county court comprised of elected justices of the peace. Whitthorne said that during that period two Negroes had been members of the County Court and one had been selected for jury service.

Prosecutor Paul F. Bumpus charged the procedure established by NAACP lawyers constituted "a legal filibuster to keep us here in court for 50 years." Attorney Looby then threatened to call "every Negro" in the county—some 10,000—to prove the defense's contention. Sat. 6-8-46

The four defense lawyers said that a change of venue and separate trials for the defendants would be requested if the motions to quash the indictments were overruled. Chicago Ill.

Bumpus offered continuous objections as the defense attorneys sought to question witnesses about race relations in Maury County. Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered the questions confined to whether colored persons have served on juries there.

500 At Hearing

Some 500 persons, about two-thirds of them colored, are attending the hearings on the second floor of the three-story, gray limestone court house in Columbia, but there have been no demonstrations.

"Everything is quiet on the surface," Attorney Looby told The Defender, but added that "it wouldn't take much" to stir up something.

Looby, who travels the 43 miles between Nashville and Columbia daily, declared, "We will exhaust every legal avenue we have."

Prevailing opinion in Columbia is that although Maury County is sensitive to the indignation expressed by individuals and organizations all over the country, a way is being sought to escape further censure and at the same time not yield to outside pressure.

Defendants Confident

The defendants, who are out on bond and going about their normal pursuits, seemed unconcerned about the outcome of the case. "We have confidence in the lawyers assigned by the NAACP and know that any unfavorable decisions in the local courts will not mark the end of the fight. Sat.

"The court here knows that any injustice wil be reversed by higher courts. We are expecting therefor that the possibility of a fair trial here is good," said one of the major defendants. 6-8-46

The 28 Negroes are charged with 31 offenses ranging from attempted murder to creating a disturbance during the bitter racial clash.

U.S. Grand Jury Probe

Meanwhile, a Federal grand jury probe of the Columbia riot is due to continue here after the weekend adjournment. Scheduled for appearance were Clark Foreman and James A. Dombrowski of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and Carl Van Doren, the author.

Dombrowski will be quizzed on a Southern Conference pamphlet called "The Truth About Columbia." Foreman, in Washington, said he will not appear because he has not first hand information about the riots.

Van Doren, in New York, said that his health would not permit him to appear. He said he had no first hand information to offer.

'Rich Men's Jury' Hit At Tennessee Trial

By Harry Raymond

Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 18.—Not only are Negroes illegally barred from jury service in Columbia, but poor white men are also barred, Z. Alexander Looby, Negro defense counsel, dramatically charged today. He made the charge during a heated argument to outlaw "attempt to murder" indictments against local Negro leaders who fought off a lynch attempt last February.

"The jury box was illegally filled because the jury commission limited the box to large taxpayers only," Looby asserted, "excluding the names of poorer white and Negro property owners."

Wed. 6-19-46

The Negro lawyer's attack on the "rich man's jury," added to his hard-hitting courtroom assault on Jimcrow juries, came as a surprise to district attorney Paul F. Bumpus.

Bumpus has been battling in the sweltering courthouse for nearly four weeks—and with no success—to prove Negroes served on juries and the defendants were legally indicted.

New York

It was the state's own witness, Joe Taylor, a jury commissioner, who told how poor whites, in addition to Negroes, are discriminated against.

USED TAX BOOKS

Taylor, questioned by Bumpus, testified prospective jurors were chosen from the tax books and there "is nothing on the books to indicate a man's color."

Cross-examined by Thurgood Marshall, general counsel for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, Taylor said he knew of Negroes who were qualified for jury service. He said, however, he never knew of a Negro actually serving on a jury in Maury County.

Marshall, a Negro, questioned the jury commissioner, a white man, relentlessly. The jury commission, Taylor said, "tried to pick large taxpayers."

Wed. 6-19-46

Looby was on his feet in a flash. He demanded the defense plea of abatement to quash the indictment be amended to include a charge the jury commission not only acted unlawfully by excluding Negroes but failed in its duty by excluding poor whites.

Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram upheld the district attorney, who argued it was too late in the case to amend the plea. Ingram declared Taylor's testimony did not justify the amendment.

STATE RESTS

Wed. 6-19-46

The state's attorney, resting its case in the preliminary jury plea, put a number of witnesses on the stand, white and Negroes, who testified nine Negroes had been called for jury service. All of them had been excused for various reasons and never served, the testimony showed.

The Nashville Banner, Crump-McKellar polltax newspaper, hailed this state testimony as "ace in the hole" and a "climax which rocked defense claims."

The defense, however, in a tense atmosphere and with threats made on the lives of NAACP lawyers, placed more than 200 witnesses on the stand showing no Negroes served on juries in the county in 50 years.

A decision on the NAACP plea to quash the indictments against 25 of 31 accused Negroes is expected momentarily.

New York

There has been no indication when an actual jury trial of the defendants will begin if the plea of abatement is overruled.

The defense indicated it was prepared to file other pleas for a change of venue, separate trials and other motions to quash the indictments.

Negroes To Be Tried In Cases At Columbia

Montgomery Advertiser

Montgomery, Ala.

Thurs. 6-20-46

Colored Association Lawyers Lose Their Court Battle

COLUMBIA, TENN., June 19. (AP)—The National Association for the advancement of colored people lost today a three and one-half week battle to free 26 Negroes from an assortment of criminal charges arising from the racial disorders here last February.

As a consequence the defendants will be tried, probably within a week or so, but not before NAACP attorneys have pursued their announced intention to seek removal of the cases to another jurisdiction.

The oral opinion delivered by Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram, who presided at the non-jury hearing, held that there was no merit in the NAACP complaint that the indictments were invalid because they were voted by an all-white grand jury.

"Referring especially to the allegations that there has been unlawful and systematic exclusion of Negroes from jury service in Maury County," Judge Ingram said, "the court is of the opinion there is no merit to this allegation and specifically overrules each plea on this particular ground."

Thurs 6-20-46

The county board of jury commissioners acted lawfully, the court held, in the selection of names from the jury box and in the use of county tax records from which it chose prospective jurors. He added there was "indisputable evidence" that the list of prospective grand jurors for the February term of circuit court contained the names of 10 Negroes.

Montgomery Ala.

"The fact that numerous citizens of the colored race testified that they had never served on a jury and had never been summoned for jury service," Judge Ingram said, "is not conclusive that Negroes have been excluded from jury service."

State Lawyer Explodes Over Race Disorder

Montgomery, al.

Advertiser, Ala,

Tennessee Case Called Monkey Law By State Attorney

COLUMBIA, TENN., May 31.—(AP)—The state's attorney charged today that lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were attempting to make another "monkey law" case out of a legal action stemming from the February Columbia racial disorders.

"We don't want another monkey law case in Tennessee and we're not going to have one if my office has anything to do with it," shouted District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus.

He referred to the Scopes "monkey trial" at Dayton, Tenn., 20 years ago.

Bumpus' outburst came as the defense questioned Maury County Criminal Judge W. C. Whitthorne, 80-year-old member of the Maury County Bar since 1888.

NAACP Attorney Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga had drawn from Whitthorne testimony that between 1898 and 1901 grand jurors were selected by the county court comprised of elected justices of the peace and that during that period two Negroes had been members of county court and one had been selected for jury service.

6-1-46

The state's attorney objected on grounds this was immaterial to the present hearing on a motion to throw out indictments against 26 Negroes arrested in connection with the racial disturbance. The NAACP contends that the grand jury which indicted them was prejudiced because Negroes "are systematically excluded" from jury service.

"The only question at issue is whether Negroes were excluded from the jury panel of the February term of Circuit Court this year," Bumpus asserted. "We've had enough of this immaterial testimony."

Sat.

Further questioning of Whitthorne drew the statement that in 1901 the duty of selecting qualified jurors was shifted by law to a Board of Jury Commissioners.

"Since that time have there been any Negroes on juries?' asked Weaver.

"I don't recollect any," was the reply.

"How many Negroes in Maury County would you say were qualified to serve as jurors?" Whitthorne was asked.

"I don't know—there are very few."

6-1-46

Later Whitthorne said there undoubtedly were some legally qualified. The state drew from him testimony that jurors from Circuit Court, a higher court than Criminal Court over which Whitthorne presides, all drawn from a jury box while those serving in Criminal Court can be summoned by the sheriff at the court's direction.

"Sometimes when I'm short a juror I look out over the audience and select a man I know to be good and pick him," Whitthorne testified.

Negro Groups Hit Jury Report on Tenn. Terror

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Claudia Jones

Tues 6-18-46

The Federal Grand Jury's report whitewashing the Columbia, Tennessee, violence against Negro citizens was condemned today as a "hollow mockery," a "smug denial of onstitutional rights of Negro citizens" and "federal indifference" to the plight of Negro citizens in statements by the National Negro Congress and the United Negro and Allied Veterans of America.

Revels Cayton, executive secre- ary of the NNC, characterized he Federal Grand Jury's report s "directly implicating the Fed- al Government itself in the anton act of upholding the ght of Southern pro-fascist KK groups to continue organ- ed mass terror, personal assault, murder and 'legal state-sponsored lynchings'"—all without penalty of law."

"The simple issue before the Federal Grand Jury," the NNC statement said "was the question of denial of basic constitutional rights. This has been smugly—indeed cruelly denied. Negroes and all progressive labor challenge this action. The real defendant of the Negro people's basic rights—labor and its allies, must speak out now—loud and angry.

The Federal Grand Jury's action more than fully confirms the correct course of the recent National Negro Congress convention in Detroit, which petitioned the Social and Economic Council of the United Nations for recourse from oppression for the Negro people."

Joseph Walker, Adjutant of the New York State Chapter of the United Negro and Allied Veterans at 315 Lenox Ave., blasted the report as "an attempt by fascist-minded officials to silence the loud demands of the Negro people for full economic, civil and political rights in the South."

"These fascist minded officials seek to encourage KKK violence and lynch terror in order to combat the militancy of the Negro people and the strong unity being forged between Negroes and whites," Walker stated.

The UNAVA adjutant further stated that "any refusal or reluctance by the President and the Attorney General to use additional Federal machinery to protect the lives of Negro citizens in the South would be construed as indifference to the contributions which Negro soldiers made to the winning of the war."

"The vicious KKK inspired attack on decent citizens, half of whom were veterans, is a threat to the safety and peace of all citizens of minority groups," it concluded.

Tues 6-18-46

It now becomes the duty of the President to use his authority or influence to secure justice for these victims of this fascist menace, the statement said.

The 3,900-word report to the Federal Judge, Elmer D. Davis, actually praised the Tennessee state troops and highway police who ravaged the

Negro community, destroyed business establishments, and machine-gunned the entire section. Despite hundreds of sworn statements and photographic evidence and the killing of two Negroes in the Columbia jail, the report assailed the "avowed Communist press" for "inflammatory" articles.

Both organizations condemning the failure of the Grand Jury in Nashville, Tennessee, called on the people, labor and all Americans to protest to President Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark to reverse the report of the Federal Grand Jury.

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30 Will Face Trial In Racial Outburst

Sun. 5-26-46

COLUMBIA, TENN., May 25—(AP)—Thirty Negro defendants face trial in Circuit Court next week in connection with racial disturbances three months ago in which two Negroes died and a dozen persons were injured.

A Federal Grand Jury meanwhile will resume a session in Nashville Monday which it began April 8 at the request of Attorney-General Tom Clark to investigate possible violations of Federal laws during the disturbances in late February.

The Maury County Circuit Court is scheduled to hear please Tuesday seeking to have charges of assault with intent to murder and of accessory waivered. If the pleas are turned down, the 30 defendants will go on trial immediately. Sun. 5-26-46

Riot Victims Get First Court Hearing

Informer Houston Texas

COLUMBIA, TENN.—(ANP)—Defense lawyers for the 31 Negroes indicted here in the rioting last Feb. 25 argued the validity of the charges Tuesday before Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram. The defense plans to show that the grand jury which reported the indictments did not include Negroes.

Charges of assault with intent to kill have been placed against 29 Negroes and one is charged with accessory before the fact. Accessory charges are lodged against four of the 29. The NAACP and several other organizations are contributing to the defense of the 31 defendants.

State troopers and state guardsmen, who have been blamed for precipatating the riot and wrecking of the Negro business section here, arrested more than 100 Negroes after they blazed their way into "Mink slide" during the fighting.

Race Disorder Trial Locked As Neither Side Will Yield

Richmond, Va. Times-Dispatch

COLUMBIA, TENN., June 8—(AP)—The effort of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to clear 26 Negroes of charges arising from February racial disorders here appeared today to be developing into an endurance contest.

As Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered a week-end recess yesterday, neither NAACP counsel nor the State's attorney was ready to give any quarter in their two-week-long battle over whether Negroes are systematically barred from jury service in Maury County.

The NAACP, through Chief Counsel Thurgood Marshall, is seeking a court order setting aside the indictments against the 26 Negroes on grounds that the grand jury which indicted was all white and thus prejudiced. It has paraded 186 Negro witnesses to the stand and all but one testified he was qualified for jury service but had never been called.

Sun 6-9-46

Blanket Denial

The State's attorney, District Attorney-General Paul F. Bumpus, has said he would show that Negroes' names were in the jury box from which the February grand jury was selected. The State has entered a blanket denial of NAACP allegations that Negroes have been systematically excluded from juries for more than half a century. Richmond, Va.

All witnesses under cross-examination have acknowledged that they could not assert under oath that jury commissioners had failed to place the names of Negroes in the jury box "solely because of their race or color."

During the first week of the nonjury hearing one NAACP witness, a graying former Negro professor of biology, told the court he had been summoned for jury service more than a year ago but was excused at his own request because he thought there had been some mistake. Sun. 6-9-46

As this week's court sessions ended, Bumpus rejected an NAACP suggestion that the State "surrender" and admit that there are Negroes qualified for jury service but that they have been regularly barred from becoming jurymen.

Jury Issue Opens Columbia Trials

Afro-Am

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Hearings opened here Tuesday on pleas in abatement filed by NAACP attorneys defending the 31 men facing trial under indictments of attempted murder following the Feb. 25 disturbances here.

The pleas in each of the indictments raise the question of exclusion of qualified colored persons from the grand jury which returned the indictments. Baltimore, Md.

The NAACP announced that Leon A. Ransom, member of the national legal committee and former professor at Howard Law School, has been assigned to work with Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, Z. Alexander Looby and Maurice Weaver, defense attorneys.

Walter White Says Evidence Overwhelming

Daily World Atlanta, Ga. Tues. 6-18-46

All-White Jury Fails To Indict In Columbia Riot

NEW YORK—(SNS)—June 15—Walter White, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Saturday assailed the report of the grand jury in Nashville, Tennessee that after a two and one-half month investigation it failed to find evidence of civil rights violations in the Columbia, Tennessee racial disturbance.

Mr. White telegraphed his criticism to President Truman and Attorney-General Tom Clark. Texts of the messages follow:

To President Truman:

"Collapse of Federal machinery for justice in Tennessee makes imperative that you alert justice department and other Federal agencies to furnish sufficient forces to protect Negroes and members of other minorities in the exercise of their constitutional rights in the South. Tuesday 6-18-46

"The grand jury report on the Tennessee Case is another instance of failure to enforce law in state dominated by notorious Crump-McKellar Machine."

To Attorney-Gen. Tom Clark:

"The shocking report of the all white Federal Grand Jury concerning Columbia, Tennessee has jeopardized the safety of every citizen in the country, particularly Negroes and members of other minorities. Failure to indict perpetrators will be interpreted as a signal by State Officials and the Ku Klux Klan throughout the South to terrorize Negro communities during the coming Primary Elections without fear of Federal interferance. There has been in existence at all times. Photographic and Eye witness evidence of actual violations of Federal Rights by State Highway Patrol and State Guard. The findings of the jury flies in the face of evidence and demonstrates that the Grand Jury ignored the evidence or that the FBI failed to furnish the full facts. The NAACP and the National Committee for Justice in Columbia, Tennessee, will both undertake to inform the country of the thruth and of the reponsibility which the Federal Government bears for failure to take adequate action and prosecute the prepetrators of the cutrage against Negro citizens in Columbia. Collapse of the Federal machinery for Justice in Tennessee places upon the Federal Government the duty to take the immediate steps necessary to protect the lives and liberty of Negro citizens and members of other minorities. We call upon you to immediately furnish adequate forces of Federal law enforcement officers in the South to protect the exercise of Constitutional Rights. 6-18-46

The Grand Jury insted of performing its director job of locating the criminals devoted itself to a denunciation of those who exposed the crime. We reaffirm the essential facts in the pamphlet and will prosecute the defense with renewed vigor." Atlanta, Ga.

Ponder Effect Of Grand Jury Report On Riot

Daily World Atlanta, Ga. Wed. 6-19-46

4,200-Word Report Indicts Alleged Communist Press

NASHVILLE — (ANP) — Liberals throughout the nation this week are speculating on the effect of last Friday's federal grand jury report on the forthcoming trials of 25 Negroes at Columbia. Most of the 4200-word report indicted the "Communist press" for disseminating "falsehoods' 'and "half truths" during the probe, and found no fault with the conduct of state and county police in Columbia during the disorders. 6-29-46

Based on testimony of 390 witnesses, information from 10 to 12 FBI investigators, and a number of special attorneys from the U. S. Department of Justice, the report emphasized the work of organization interested in justice and execution of civil rights in connection with the case, and made little comment on the program and terrorist raids of Mink Slide, the Negro section of Columbia. 6-19-46

ALLEGED "FALSEHOODS"

The "falsehoods" and "half-truths,' charged to Communist origin, were said to have been contained in "lurid and inflammatory stories" published about the disorders of last February 25 and 26. It was declared that many of the accounts concerning the riot here without factual foundation and were thought to have been "manufactured and circulated with malicious intent and desire to incite racial discord and intolerance and to cause further racial strife."

The jurors reported that they had studied the possibility of returning indictments against those responsible for the "wildly distorted accounts," but revealed "to our regret, we are advised that the mailing of such pamphlets does not constitute a violation of any federal statute." 6-19-46

Authoritative legal sources declare the report is certain to have a bearing upon prosecution of the 25 Negroes in state court at Columbia. The 25 are charged with either attempted murder, or being accessories to attempted murder, in connection with "acts of violence." Daily World.

District Attorney General Bumpus, commenting upon the grand jury report, said he was pleased that the 23-man jury had reached the same conclusion his office had come to. He says he is aware that the cases are aimed at the U. S. Supreme Court, but that he has no intention of conceding defeat without a fight to the finish. 6-19-46

Jimcro on Trial

People's Voice.

JIMCRO IS BEING PARADED before the bar of justice in Columbia, Tenn.—in the form of hundreds of witnesses who testify that never in their memory has a Negro citizen served on a jury in that community. S.A. 6-15-46

This is an extremely important fact to establish, for it may be the basis for saving the lives of 31 Negroes framed up on "attempt to murder" charges when, in all truth, they should be prosecuting the local and state government for the wanton and unnecessary destruction of the Negro community and the murder of two Negro suspects in jail.

It will cost a lot of money to win this case, **but we must win.** And all of us must share in paying the bill. Send your contributions now to the defense fund of the National Committee for Justice in Columbia, Tenn. (Room 503, 20 W. 40 st, New York City.).

TENNESSEE NEGROES DENY SHOOTING POLICE

The Times New York, N.Y. Sun. 9-29-46

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 28—The defense tried today to shake the State's case against twenty-five Maury County Negroes on trial in Circuit Court here for the shooting of four Columbia policemen last February.

Meade Johnson, one of the defendants, denied the assertions of several State witnesses that they saw him armed with a shotgun among a group of Negroes a short time before the shooting of the officers.

He declared he had locked his cafe and pool room at 7:30 o'clock on the night of the shooting, went home, ate supper and went to bed.

Sally Johnson, the defendant's wife, took the stand to support his claim of being home all night.

The shooting of the officers occurred about 9:45 o'clock on the night of Feb. 25. A number of State witnesses testified they saw "between 100 and 150 Negroes" in Mink Slide from three minutes to an hour before the shooting and that about half of them were armed.

Four leading Negro citizens of Columbia testified that Julius Blair, another of the principal defendants, was attending a civic meeting at the time he was reported to have been seen by State witnesses, and a Negro girl testified that Webster Matthews was at her home during the shooting. 9-29-46

A Negro woman from Mount Pleasant, Tenn., declared her son-in-law, James Morton, a third principal defendant, was at home during the time of the shooting.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Ordeal in Columbia

The Courier Pittsburgh, Pa. Sat. 8-3-46

All indications point to the likelihood that the coming trial of the Columbia (Tenn.) victims is going to be as bitter as that celebrated trial in Decatur, Ala.

Apparently the Neanderthal element in Tennessee regards the Columbia terror case as another North-South conflict, and everything is being done by the prosecution to lend that impression.

Already efforts have been made to intimidate the representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People who are conducting the defense of the persecuted Negroes.

Tennessee officials, allergic to the truth, greatly disliked the NAACP pamphlet, "Terror in Tennessee," written by Ollie Harrington, and seem determined to do something about it.

Rebel Tennessee is tense and the atmosphere surrounding the courtroom in Columbia is such that it seems unlikely that the defendants can secure a fair trial there, especially in view of the fact that Negroes have been systematically excluded from local grand juries for decades.

But just as NAACP lawyers won a great victory in the case of the Elaine (Ark.) rioters, so victory will be the result of their efforts in Columbia, Tenn.

What is most needed now is 100 per cent support for the defense from people of good-will everywhere in the United States.

Tenn. Law Strains Point to Arrest 20 in Riot Case

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.
Sat. 10-5-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — Twenty of the defendants on trial here as principals in the alleged shooting of Police Officer Will Willsford during the Columbia race riot were arrested under conditions that strain a point to connect them with he actual shooting.

Five were taken from the home of Mrs. Daisy Lee on Woodland St. at least a block and a half from the scene of the shooting and at least 24 hours thereafter.

Several were taken from the home of James Morton which officers entered without a search warrant while others were arrested on the streets or picked up days and even weeks after the incident. None had a gun.

Defendants Arrested

The defendants' names and places or times of their arrest are as follow:

Napoleon Stewart, 34, at 8th Ave. and Woodland St.;

Willie Scott, 29, on 9th St. en route home;

Gene Williams, 20, ordered to report to jail three weeks after Feb. 25th;

Meade Johnson, 59, at home, three days after;

Robert Gentry, 23, at work, two weeks after;

Horace Gordon, 31, at Odd Fellows Hall, the day after;

Milton Johnson, 41, from streets several days after;

James Bellanfant, 25, from streets, the day after;

Julius Blair, 76, from streets, the day after.

John Lockridge, 33, William Dawson, 23, Saul Blair, 55, and James Morton were among those arrested in Morton's home at about 11 p.m. on the night of the affray, but none had a gun on his person, although several weapons were removed from the house.

Find No Guns

Paul Miles, 27, Charlie C. Edwards, 27, Luther Edwards, 24, and Lewis Miles, 25, were among those arrested in the home of Mrs. Daisy Lee where officers were unable to find any guns.

Most of these men were apprehended on the statements of persons like Leonard Evans, Early Shyer, Alexander Bullock, and Lee Andrew Shyer, who told officers that they had seen the men bearing arms in the Mink Slide area prior to the shooting.

Presented as witnesses for the State during the past week, these men admitted under cross examination that they had been beaten when taken to jail soon after the fracas.

Turn State's Evidence

Defendants, who were also in jail at the time, offer the opinion that the colored witnesses turned State's evidence on promises of being le off or because of fear and coercion.

None of them, it is pointed out, is charged under the indictment although most were admittedly in the area at the time of he shooting.

Attorneys have placed strong emphasis on the fact that at no time has the State actually placed a weapon of the type allegedly used to shoot Officer Willsford in the hands of the accused, except through testimony by colored witnesses who were not under oath.

Change Of Venue Granted To Negroes In Tennessee

Charlotte, N. C., Observer
July 3, 1946

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 2.—(AP)—Twenty-five Negro defendants facing charges growing out of racial disorders four months ago won a change of venue today but lawyers reprsenting them put in an objection to a plan to try the 25 in neighboring Lawrence county.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People sought unsuccessfully to withdraw its motion for a change of venue after Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram had granted it and then announced the trials would be held at Lawrenceburg, August 6.

In its original motion, the NAACP had contended a fair trial could not be conducted at Columbia, seat of Maury county. When Lawrence county was designated however, counsel asked that the trials be reset at Nashville. This motion was denied.

"It is a part of the defendants feelings that if any race hatred and prejudice exist in Maury county it is doubly so in Lawrence county," Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, a defense lawyer said. "There is more bigotry and racial prejudice in Lawrence county than there is in Maury."

In granting the motion for a change of venue Judge Ingram said:

"The court feels that the charges in the motion and the applications for a change of venue are well taken and should be granted."

After this action by the court, NAACP attorneys and Prosecutor Paul F. Bumpus went into conference to discuss a new site.

The negroes are charged either with assault with intent to commit murder or accessories before the fact as a result of disorders beginning last February 25 in which two negroes were killed and 11 other persons injured.

Two weeks ago, NAACP lost a three-week court attack to have the charges dropped on the ground that they were made by an all-white grand jury.

Nashville, Tenn., Banner
Aug. 7, 1946

State Fights Removal of Negroes' Trial

T 28

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By DANNY BINGHAM
(BANNER Staff Writer)

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Aug. 7—The State this morning introduced 99 affidavits to refute defense charges that a fair trial could not be obtained in Lawrence County for 25 Negroes held in connection with the Columbia race troubles.

The affidavits were presented after Defense Atty. Maurice Weaver, white Chattanoogan who is a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and former CIO lawyer, had been called to the stand by Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul Bumpus at the resumption of the hearing on a motion for a change of venue that was started here Saturday.

The defense Saturday filed a motion for a change of venue from Lawrenceburg to Nashville and introduced 200 supporting affidavits to the effect that it would be impossible for the defendants to receive a fair trial here. The defense is basing its plea on grounds that "undue excitement, prejudice and ill will followed the announcement of the change of venue from Columbia."

The attorney general called Weaver to the stand when the defense refused to stipulate that all of its affidavits were Negroes. He admitted, under the State's questioning, that they were all Negroes.

Under cross-examination by his colleague, Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville Negro attorney, who also is a representative of the NAACP, Weaver told his version of conditions as he found them on a recent visit to Lawrenceburg.

"I found a great deal of resentment among the people here ,over the change of the case from Maury to Lawrence County," he said. "The people here did not want to convict the defendants because they felt they would be criticized."

Eighty-six of the State's affidavits, seven of which were signed by Negroes, said that the affiants believed the defendants could and would receive a fair trial here, and that the only discussion of the case they had heard concerned the question of where the trial should be held. None of the discussions, they said, concerned the guilt or innocence of the defendants.

The affiants also said that newspapers had not caused excitement, prejudice or ill-will against the defendants.

One State affidavit, signed by E. L. Davidson, Lawrence County deputy circuit court clerk, said that records show that very few Negroes were indicted, there were acquitals when the cases were brought to trial. His affidavit added that the record of acquittals for Negroes was much better than for white people here.

At the opening of the State's proof this morning, the attorney general introduced a copy of the letter and the footnote to the letter's answer which were major points of argument in Saturday's session of the hearing.

The defense sought at that time to have the letter, which was written by a citizen of Lawrenceburg to Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram and the attorney general, brought into court. Bumpus refused until he had obtained the letter writer's permission. After this was done, the letter was admitted to the record this morning along with the footnote which was attached to Bumpus' answer to the letter.

Written and signed by Dr. T. J. Stockard of Lawrenceburg, the letter said:

"I am writing to say that what Mayor Downey has to say regarding your attitude in regard to bringing the Negro trial to Lawrence County does not express the views of all the people. Mayor Downey has taken the authority to criticize Judge Ingram and also threaten Mr. Bumpus in a reelection.

"I was not asked and have not seen a petition. I would not have signed one. When Judge Ingram was considering the counties in his district in which it was his opinion a fair trial could be had and selected Lawrence County, I considered that a compliment to Lawrence County. Of course, we do not want to take up anything that might cause trouble between the colors, however, some county has to do so I have, therefore, no criticism."

The controversial footnote signed by Bumpus read:

"As for the political threat, even if I were of such nature as to le that worry me under any condition, which I sincerely trust my entire life has proven is not so, under the present circumstances and at the present time, I have no intentions whatsoever of ever offering myself for public office again, and it is seriously doubtful if I shall remain much longer than necessary to work out the "racial troubles" in my present office."

It was these two bits of correspondence which caused Defense Attorney Weaver to charge "suppression of evidence" during Saturday's session, and assert that the district attorney should want to produce the correspondence to "clear the court's skirts."

Weaver promptly explained that he meant to cast no aspersions upon the court when Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram asked what he meant by that statement.

In addition, the State obtained the court's permission to introduce into this hearing the nine affidavits signed by Lawrence Countians and submitted during the change of venue hearing which brought the case from Maury to Lawrence County.

Tennessee Officer Testifies On Riot

The Advertiser
Montgomery, Ala.

LAWRENCEBURG, TENN., Sept. 19—(AP)—A 66-year-old policeman, Will Wilsford, told a Circuit Court Jury today how he and three other officers were wounded by gunfire the night of Feb. 25 in nearby Columbia, in a racial flareup for which 25 Negroes are being tried.

The officer, not yet fully recovered from the 70-odd shotgun pellets which struck him, said the four officers walked into the west end of Mink Slide, Columbia Negro business street, to investigate gunfire. They were ordered to halt, he said, and had done so when someone yelled "fire." So many shots were fired, Wilsford testified, that he could not estimate the number.

Wed. 9-25-46

The policeman was second witness in the trial which opened today after four months of legal skirmishing and a six week's grind to select the all-white jury.

First witness was Charles McKissack, surveyor, who testified he had prepared a map of the Mink Slide area which the State introduced. It contained a red line indicating the course the patrolmen took entering the area, which he said he was instructed to draw by Prosecutor Paul F. Bumpus.

All 25 defendants pleaded innocent when the case went to trial.

DEFENSE LAWYER TRIPS POLICE IN RIOT TRIALS

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.
Wed. 9-25-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tennessee — (NNPA)— Two policemen testified in Circuit Court here last Friday that they were shot from ambush and wounded one hour after they had assured colored people of Columbia, Tenn., that reports of impending mob violence were mere rumors during the disturbance last February.

Their testimony was given during the second day of the trial of twenty-five color men who are charged with being accessories before the fact and attempted murder in the first degree as the result of the incident which followed an altercation between Mrs Gladys Stephenson and her son, James, and William Fleming, a white radio repairman.

The two officers also said that previous to the time they were shot two of the defendants, Julius Blair and his son, Sol Blair, civic and business leaders among the colored people of Maury County, in which Columbia is situated, told them "to keep the white people out of Mink Slide, because we're ready for them"

Mink Slide is the common name for the colored business section in Columbia in which four city policemen were wounded when they went into the district following reports of mob violence February 25.

Benard O. Stofel, 27-year old war veteran, was the first witness last Friday, and the third witness called by the prosecution after introduction of proof began last Thursday morning.

He told the court of a visit he and three other officers made to Mink Slide about 8:45 o'clock in the night and finding the street crowded with colored people.

TESTIMONY CONFLICTS

"We stopped the patrol car about midway down the street where the largest group of Negroes were milling around," Stofel stated. "We could see that about 50 to 75 were armed with shotguns and rifles."

Samuel Richardson and Chief of Police J. W. Griffin followed Stofel to the witness stand after the noon recess and testified in practically the same vein

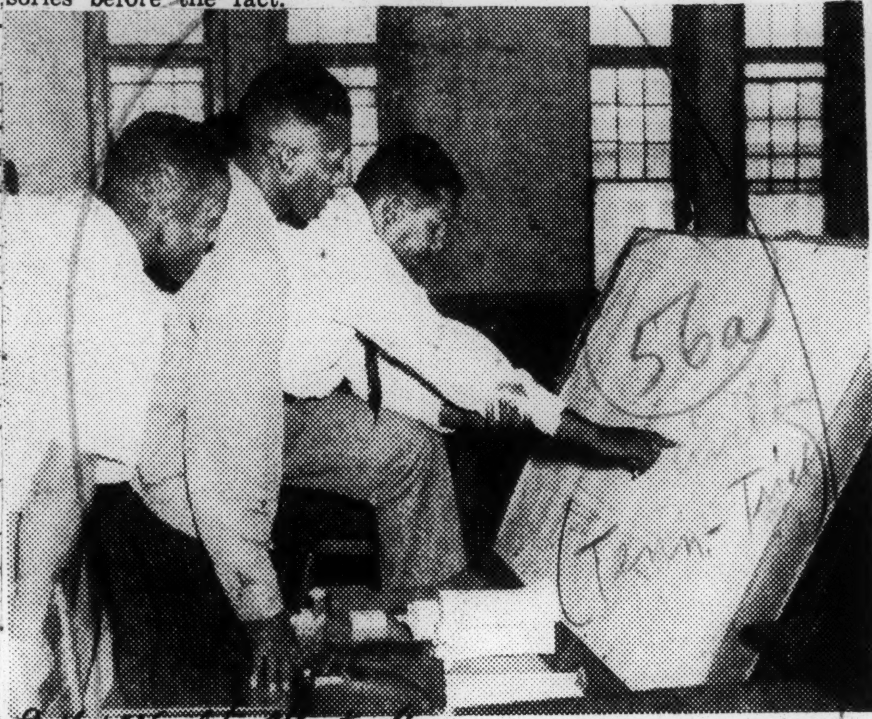
Both these two and Chief J. Walter Griffin who later took the stand before Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram, admitted under cross-examination that it was too dark in Mink Slide to see who did the shooting.

Chief Griffin said he was pretty sure he had called out: "This is the police!" just before the firing started. He told Defense Attorney Maurice Weaver that he did not remember making the statement, read by Weaver from a conversation set down last March, that: "I didn't tell them who we were and neither did the other officers."

Griffin, as has a previous witness, served as a character witness for the two Blairs and Morton, giving them reputations for "peace and quietude"

Later, when defense attorneys asked Richardson to point out in court those defendants he had seen in Mink Slide, Richardson identified the Blairs but said he couldn't see James Morton. Judge Ingram then ordered Morton to rise, reversing himself, however, when the defense objected.

Taking of testimony began last Thursday after four months of legal skirmishing and six weeks of selection of an all-white jury. All twenty-five defendants pleaded innocent of charges of assault with intent to kill or of being accessories before the fact.



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Tenn-Trial

Daily World Atlanta, Ga. Wed. 9-25-46

A. L. Ransom of Washington, D. C., counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which is defending 25 Columbia Negroes being tried in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., for participating in last February's racial flareup in Columbia, studies a map of the Mink slide area which the state has entered as exhibit "A." Others are defendants (unidentified). 9-25-46

Columbia on Feb. 25. The case has been in litigation in Columbia and Lawrenceburg since May 28th.

DEFENSE BEGINS SUMMAR[Y] IN TRIAL OF 25 NEGROES

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Thurs. 10-3-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Oct 2.—A jury of Southern white men listened for nearly two hours today to a Negro scholar's explanation of the gunfire which blazed forth and wounded four policemen in Columbia's "Mink Slide" last February.

"They felt that any white man who came down there that night came to lynch that boy," he told the jury. "And they rightly felt they had to use force to protect him."

These words are the kernel of the opening argument in defense of the 25 Columbia Negroes unjustly charged with attempt to commit murder.

Dr. Leon A. Ransom who spoke these words, hardly raised his voice above the ordinary conversation tone.

He said it was not his purpose to analyze the evidence of more than 50 witnesses. That, he said, will be done tomorrow by Z. A. Looby, chief counsel, and Maurice Weaver, lone white lawyer for the defense.

He asked the jury to try to put itself in the place of a Columbia Negro on the night of Feb. 25.

Ransom told of two lynchings of Columbia Negroes during the lifetime of the defendants. He told how every Negro in that town knew of Feb. 25, that white men had bought a rope and planned to lynch James Stephenson, Negro Navy veteran.

"Lynching is murder," Ransom declared. "And the Negroes who armed themselves against lynching that night did nothing wrong. They said they would defend James Stephenson to the last man. And that's a good American statement."

The charge of Judge Joe Ingram will be read to the jury after final arguments by counsel tomorrow morning. A verdict is expected by Thursday night.

Talesmen Rebel at Restraint In Tennessee Negro Trial

Daily Worker, New York, New York

56a

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 16.—A threatened strike of prospective jurors today snarled the proceedings for the entire morning in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes.

The prospective jurors, most of them overalled farmers, declared dissatisfaction with Judge Ingram's order that they remain in the vicinity of the courthouse until called for examination.

There are 400 prospective jurors on the panel for the Columbia case, and examination of the talesmen which started yesterday, is proceeding at approximate rate of 25 a day, when the case was called this morning the judge was informed of the threatened strike. 8-17-46

F. L. Gowen, a farmer and one of the talesmen had secured forty names of prospective jurors to a petition demanding to go home "**We, as picked-up men to sit on the jury, have hereby signed to go home, not getting any pay to stand around,**" said the petition.

HOLDS TALESMEN Sat.

Advised of the dissension, Judge Ingram ordered the talesmen into the courtroom on agreement with defense and state attorneys.

The prospective jurors names were picked out of a hat one at a time they were ordered to be present in court in groups of 25. The dates for prospective examination of the talesmen reach into September.

8-17-46

Only seven prospective juror were examined yesterday. All were excused. Three were excused by peremptory challenges of attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, who are counsel for the defense. State's attorney Paul F. Bumpus used up two of his 100 challenges. Judge Ingram excused two talesmen for cause.

Examination of the talesmen continued this afternoon without selection of a single juror. Examination will continue Monday morning.

J. E. Collier, the first Negro, to be examined for jury service in a central Tennessee court in 50 years was quickly eliminated by a peremptory challenge of the state.

Judge Ingram refused to eliminate J. A. Freeman when defense Attorney Z. A. Looby asked the talesman's removal when the latter said he approved of "some" of the activities of the Ku Klux Klan.

The judge finally eliminated Freeman for cause when the prospective juror said he couldn't give as much credit to testimony of a Negro as to that of a white man.

Resentment among the white populaion against holding the trial here is strong. There has been no evidence of overt acts against the 25 Negro defendants or their attorneys. But there is considerable talk unfavorable to the defendants around town.

The Negroes are charged with attempt to commit murder for their armed resistance to a lynch mob in

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Wounded Cop Admits That Negroes Fired In Fear Of Lynch Mob

The Weekly New Orleans, La.

Sat. 10-5-46

(By The Associated Negro Press)

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Oct. 2.—One of several important admissions gained from a key prosecution witness during the second day of the trial of 25 Columbia, Tenn., Negro riot victims Friday is that the Negroes fired upon the peace officers in fear of a lynch mob.

Along with the self-defense motive, defense lawyers were able to wring from Will Willsford, one of the six policemen on duty the night of the riot and one of the four wounded by frightened Negroes of the "Mink Slide" district, that:

1. He had been unable to recognize any one among the 75 persons gathered on the sidewalk in "Mink Slide" because it had been so dark that he couldn't discern whether they were whites or Negroes.

2. He had not recognized the voice of Julius Blair, or of Saul Blair, or of James Morton, all defendants, as one which cried "halt" to him and three fellow policemen just before the four police were shot.

3. He knew the Blairs and Morton well and considered their reputations as peaceable, orderly, truthful citizens to be well established, and

4. He knew no one among the 25 defendants who might have had reason to shoot him.

"Negro inhabitants of Mink Slide had 'thought a mob was coming down Willsford,'" told the court. His story, backed by three fellow officers, proves that the lynch mob did gather, but found the area totally blacked out.

The four policemen were allowed to go slowly about 12 or 15 feet into the Mink Slide district before they were told to "halt," Willsford said.

"I held up my hand and told them I was down there not to give them any trouble but to keep them out of trouble," he continued. "Some one hollered 'fire' and the guns went off. All four police were hit."

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Negro Tells of Son's Murder in Jail

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker
Tues. 10-1-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Sept. 30. — Meade Johnson, 59-year-old proprietor of a cafe and billiard hall in the Negro business block of Columbia, Tenn., was in the Maury County jail house when State Highway Patrol Boss Lynn Bomar told him "the very sad news."

He told him his son James, along with another young Negro, William Gordon, had been taken to a room for questioning and was shot dead. That was on Feb. 28.

Meade Johnson, his small body shaking with a terrible, hacking chest cough, his sharp ebony features revealing deep sorrow, recited his story from the witness stand. He is a defendant in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes, the third of the first 12 witnesses called for the defense.

Like all other Negroes in Columbia Feb. 25, Meade Johnson knew there were armed white men on the square. He feared them. He heard they were coming to get James Stephenson, local colored Navy veteran who knocked down a white radio repairman who assaulted his mother.

"There was an unusual gathering of people late in the afternoon," he told the jury. "There were more people than usual. I could see there was going to be trouble from the white people." New York, N.Y.

Q. Did you see any Negroes with guns?

A. Yes, sir, some shotguns.

Johnson said he had a repeating shotgun at home, but did not carry it that night in the street. He flatly denied testimony of a police officer who said he saw Johnson armed.

He didn't remember any names of the Negroes who were carrying arms. He did not see 76-year-old Julius Blair, Sol Blair or mortician James Morton, co-defendants with or without guns. Tues. 10-1-46

NO WITNESSES

In fact, not one of the 30 state witnesses testified to seeing any of the 25 defendants fire shots which wounded four policemen in the darkened street the night the mob was threatening the area.

Meade Johnson told how, sensing trouble, he advised his son James to close the cafe.

"He did," the father of the dead youth said. "We put a padlock on the door and I went home in a car. James also left. I never left my home that night."

Mrs. Meade Johnson followed her husband on the stand and told how he came home at 7:30 and remained all night. The state has fixed the time of the shooting of the policemen at 9:40. Yet, Meade Johnson stands accused of attempt to commit murder and being an accessory before the fact.

And there has been no evidence showing any of the defendants guilty of anything. The defense is not denying a large part of the Negro community was armed. But the Negroes were armed for good and just reason—to keep a lynch mob at safe distance. Shots were fired. Policemen were wounded. But who fired the shots? That is the question the state has not answered. And even if some of the defendants did fire they were justified under the common law of self defense.

It is evident to any observer at this trial that it was the aim of District Attorney Paul Bumpus, Public Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar, local police and other officials, to throw fear into the Negroes—to let them know Dixie Jimcrow must be obeyed and lynchers can prowl unmolested.

Testimony shows the Negroes were arrested and indicted helter-skelter lawlessly. Some of the 25 appear to have been in the area of the shooting that night shortly before it took place. But some were home in bed. Others were miles from the scene.

Jennie Arnell, petite high school senior, told the jury how the youngest defendant, 17-year-old Webster Matthews, her boy-friend, was visiting her in her home from 8 p.m. until 11:05 p.m. the night of the "trouble."

Mrs. Rose Lee Callaway, mother of Gene Williams, another defendant, testified he was home with her that night.

BLAIR AT MEETING

Scholarly Prof. Samuel Jones, high school principal; G. A. Newbern, assistant county agent; Miss J. B. Fulton, school supervisor, and A. J. Armstrong, real estate agent, told how Julius Blair was meeting with them in Miss Fulton's home between 8 and 9 p.m. They were discussing plans for raising $2,000 for a new Negro school. Police witnesse, however, testified the elderly Mr. Blair was in "Mink Slide" at that time planning "insurrection" with armed Negroes.

Lawyer Maurice Weaver said he and Z. A. Looby and Dr. Leon A. Ransom, defense counsel, expect to conclude their proof not later than Wednesday. It is expected this law suit which began on Aug. 13, will come to an end the latter part of the week.

But if there is one single conviction, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, which is financing the defense, has pledged to take it to the highest court in the land.

The state's attorney is banking on the all-white jury convicting the Negroes not on the law and evidence, but on the theory it is a crime for Negroes to defend themselves in Maury County, Tenn.

Negroes To Be Tried Outside Columbia

Birmingham News
Birmingham, Ala.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 3—(AP)—Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram has granted a motion by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for a change of venue in the trial of 25 Negroes indicted in connection with the February racial disorders here.

Attorneys for the Negroes had contended that a fair and impartial trial could not be obtained in Maury County of which Columbia is the seat. Wed. 7-3-46

N. A. A. C. P. attorneys and the state's prosecutor, Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus, immediately went into conference to work out a new site for the trial. The Negroes are charged variously with assault with intent to commit murder and with being accessories before the fact.

Lyncher Ordered 30 Columbia Negroes Held

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.
Sat. 9-14-46

The warrants on which most of the 30 Negro leaders of Columbia, Tenn., now being tried at Lawrenceburg, were arrested last February, were issued by a county magistrate who, 12 years before, participated in the lynching of a 17-year old Negro boy.

MINOR

The man loaned his automobile used in kidnapping the victim, and invited neighbors to come to the public castration and hanging of the boy.

The man is C. Hayes Denton, a magistrate and "leading citizen" of Maury County. It was he who made the decision that the killing should take the form of a public castration and hanging and not a burning.

Another figure in the present frame-up aided Denton in that earlier lynching. This man is **Bert Erwin, coroner of Maury County.**

> ***On Sept. 22 The Worker will publish a condensation from the chapter of the booklet which tells of the lynching of an innocent Negro boy, Henry Choate, from the window of the courtroom in which at Columbia the present frame-up trial began.***

Erwin was one of those who 13 years ago held the arms of the Negro boy while the ghastly mutilation of his body was performed, then pulled in the slack of the rope and tied it to the tree, and pushed the boy off a ladder to hang.

These are the charges made by Robert Minor in a booklet about to come off the press of the New Century Publishers, telling the story of the present frame-up and attempt to send 30 courageous people to virtual life imprisonment in the present trial at Lawrenceberg.

Minor says the trial is the continuation of the lynching attempt. The heroic acion of the Negroes, with a few shotguns and a lot of courage, prevented the lynching of a young Negro veteran, James Stephenson, and his mother in February this year.

It was C. Hayes Denton who, last February changed the charges against the boy veteran and his mother from breach of the peace to "assault with intent to commit murder." Bail was raised and Denton tried to persuade the boy's bondsmen to leave him in the prison where he could easily be lynched. When the mob of 75 men were prevented from lynching the Negroes, Denton played the chief role in the selecting the victims among the leading Negroes of the community and organized the frame-up.

As a county magistrate, he fixed the bail of the 70 Negroes under arrest at the time, at a total of $350,000 in an effort to keep them in prison in defiance of their constitutional rights against excessive bail.

A Columbia newspaper, supporting the frame-up of the 30 leading Negro citizens, declared that the races could "live together in peace and harmony in the future as they have in the past 75 years.' Minor shows that in the past 75 years there were 203 recorded lynchings in Tennessee.

The author gathered much of the material first hand in Columbia and around Maury County, where the present struggle began.

He exposes the record of the chief figures in the lynchings in and around Columbia for the past 25 years.

The incident that began the present struggle is called "the 204th lynching—the lynching that failed." The 30 Negroes are being framed says Minor, solely for preventing a lynching. Sat. 9-14-46

He tells about burnings at the stake, hangings of whole families and the many murders by small gangs, during that time. The figure 203, he warns is arbitrary, for most lynchings are never recorded, and the real total is probably two or three times that many.

The account of the capture of a Negro boy, Henry Choate, his condemnation by a "kangaroo court" of well-to-do land owners, his hangin from the window of the same courtroom in Columbia where the present 30 Negro defendants were arraigned, is one of the most agonizing accounts ever published. Daily Worker

Another story—the public castration and hanging of a boy—Cordie Cheek — on phony charges could hardly be matched for terrible, infuriating brutality. New York, N.Y.

But these stories are not "written," the author tells us; they are merely taken down in shorthand and printed in the words of the eye-witnesses, and only after being checked with authoritative records.

Public demand compelled U. S. Attorney-General Tom C. Clark to order a federal grand jury investigation into the present case.

"But the **federal** grand jury to which Clark entrusted the inquiry **also** was illegally formed by systematic exclusion of Negroes. . . ."

Minor reveals for the first time, in the present case that Elmer D. Davies, the federal judge to whom Clark gave the supervision of the federal grand jury, is a former member of the Ku Klux Klan.

CLARK'S 'ACHIEVEMENTS'

The main achievement of Tom Clark's all-white federal grand jury is its deliberate concealment of the facts—that two of the figures in the present lynch-frame-up were also present in the past castration and lynching of Cordie Cheek. Such is the contribution of Tom Clark and the FBI to the frame-up of 30 Negroes. Sat. 9-14-46

The Worker has obtained from New Century Publishers the right to give its readers brief advance extracts from this page page booklet.

Tenn. Cop Admits Illegal Arrests

Daily Worker

By Harry Raymond

New York, N.Y. Fri. 9-27-46

56(a) Civilian

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 26.—Arrogantly shouting his answers at times, big, bald, pink faced Lynn Bomar, state highway patrol boss, admitted during stormy defense examination in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes today that he was the man who led armed State officers last February in the most widespread series of illegal searches, seizures and arrests against Negroes in Tennessee's long history. For three hours, Bomar, squinting his right eye, told how he roared into Columbia after the Negroes had taken up arms against a lynch mob. He made no efforts to arrest or disarm white men he saw with guns on the public square, he said. **But, he explained, he immediately set out with the aid of some 50 highway patrolmen to make wholesale arrests in the colored "Mink Slide" area.**

Bomar testified, under cross-examination by defense counsel Maurice Weaver, he ordered his men to surround the Negro business block after persons in it allegedly fired and wounded four policemen.

NO WARRANT

At daybreak, Bomar, former All-American Vanderbilt football end, entered the home of undertaker James Morton, defendant. He said he had no warrant and admitted entering the home illegally, seizing and arresting 11 Negroes, only four of whom are defendants, and removing a number of shotguns, rifles and pistols.

Defense lawyer Z. A. Looby arose, objecting to any evidence growing out of the illegal raid.

"The fact that Bomar is a commissioner does not give him any more authority than anybody else," the Negro attorney declared. **"A man's house is his castle. The evidence is not admissable because of the illegal entry, search and seizure."**

A long argument between state and defense counsel ended in further questioning of the witness.

Q. Did you get Morton's permission to enter and search?

A. I just went right in.

Q. (By the court)—Was the door open when you entered the house? Did you turn the knob?

A. I turned the knob and walked right in.

Q. Did anybody object?

A. I didn't wait to see. I knew a felony had been committed and I went in to get the guilty parties.

Trial Judge Joe M. Ingram granted the defense half of its objection, permitting testimony about the 11 arrested but not about Morton.

Bomar began shouting angrily at Weaver. **"Let me answer the way I want,"** he cried. **"It was part of my job to protect lives and property. I acted for safety measures and to keep down trouble."**

Weaver then produced 12 photographs showing the wrecked and looted "Mink Side" business houses. (These pictures were published exclusively last March in the Daily Worker).

"Do you intend to tell us you ordered what was done during that raid?" Weaver asked.

"All men were instructed to use reasonable force only and not damage property or hurt individuals," Bomar replied.

Q. Were the orders carried out well? The Daily Worker

A. Pretty well.

Q. Was damage done to the property?

A. Yes.

"Isn't it true that every business place in that 'Mink Slide' area was demolished, embalming fluid was poured in (Morton's) caskets and they were destroyed?" Weaver asked.

"Isn't it true that the cloth on billiard tables were ripped, cash registers systematically robbed, nickelodeons broken into and the cash taken out, cash registers broken and robbed and cases of beer taken and carried miles away, drunk by your men? Is that not so?"

Bomar almost leaped out of the witness chair. His face was crimson. He was shaking with rage. "It is not," he roared.

Bomar looked threateningly at Weaver. The lawyer reached for the stack of photographs of the wreckage. "I know you're a football player," Weaver said. He began to ask Bomar to look at the pictures and state if they didn't show the condition he and his men left the stores and shops in when they completed the raid.

One of the pictures show a huge KKK marked on a casket in Morton's wrecked funeral parlor. The Judge ruled the pictures could not be marked as exhibits.

Attorney Looby arose immediately, objected and placed the photographs in the court record as "proffers of proof." The jury, however, was barred from viewing the photographs. Fri. 9-27-46

District Attorney Paul Bumpus made his most vigorous objection of the day against the pictures. **He argued "some foreign group or association" might have done the "Mink Slide" wrecking.**

Dr. Leon A. Ransom was on his feet at once objecting to this remark and demanding an apology. "My feelings are hurt when he says this was done by some foreign association," Ransom declared. "I represent the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I object to the inference that the NAACP came down here and wrecked the buildings like that."

The District Attorney thereupon made his first apology to the defense during the long trial.

Retired Farmer Fourth Racial Case Juror

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala. Tues. 8-27-46

LAWRENCEBURG, TENN., Aug. 26.—(AP)—A 73-year-old retired farmer, John Pigg, today became the fourth juror selected in the marathon effort to form a trial jury in the case of 25 Columbia, Tenn., Negro defendants accused of participating in racial disorders last February.

Pigg's acceptance by both the State and defense attorneys, employed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, came as examination of prospective jurors entered its third week. Tues. 8-27-46

During the period since questioning began August 15, a total of 133 veniremen have been examined from a panel of 312. The defense thus far has used 25 of its legal 200 peremptory challenges and the State 10 out of the 100 to which it is entitled.

Defense Fights for Fair Jury In Columbia Negroes' Trial

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Sat. 9-7-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 6.—Defense attorneys, almost completely muzzled by angry rulings of Judge Joe M. Ingram, continued what appeared today to be a futile battle to pick a fair and impartial jury to try the 25 Columbia Negroes.

56(a) Civilian

Barred from asking prospective jurors any questions on race prejudice or law, the judge further circumscribed the defense by forbidding defense lawyer Maurice Weaver from quizzing veniremen on other subjects.

Weaver was halted abruptly by the court when he tried to probe a prospective juror on the effect the latter's friendship with District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus would have on arriving at a verdict.

The attorney, overruled every time he opened his mouth, was forced to dismiss the venireman with a peremptory challenge.

"I don't know what to ask the venireman," Weaver declared. **"I don't know what I am permitted to ask."**

Earlier Judge Ingram ordered Weaver to sit down and forbade the lawyer's making a legal explanation of an exception to the high handed court rulings.

Dr. Leon A. Ransom, defense lawyer, was barred too, from making a statement for the record.

"You can make your statements during the recess," Judge Ingram warned.

QUESTIONS

Nearly all the Judge's rulings during the day were accompanied with open and veiled threats against defense attorneys. Three times the Judge warned Weaver he would jail him for **"contempt"** if he continued objecting and excepting to the court rulings.

The Judge continued to question the veniremen in groups. Some he excused for medical reason, others, who speak out and say they would not give the defendants a fair trial, were sometimes removed for cause. But most of the veniremen are qualified quickly by the court.

The defense then had no alternative but to ask a few simple questions and then, if the venireman appears to be a prejudiced man, to challenge him peremptorily.

Howard Pennington, a sawmill man was qualified for jury service by the Judge, despite the venireman's testimony that he would believe a police officer on the witness stand over and above other citizens.

Seven jurors are now in the box. The others are W. E. Staggs, farmer; Wash King, farmer and former miner; Segal Davis, carpenter; John Pigg, retired farmer; A. J. Jordan, farmer, and Herbert Patterson, merchant. Patterson entered the box this afternoon.

Defense Aide Missing

STATE BRINGS 'WHITE ANGLE' INTO RIOT TRIAL

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—The mysterious disappearance of a court stenographer, the threatening of the defense attorney, and the futile attempt of the State to justify the exclusion of Negroes from the jury by showing that certain whites had never been summoned, were major developments of the hearing of pleas in abatement for twenty-five Negroes involved in the Columbia riot.

With the State completing testimony Saturday, Atty. Thurgood Marshall, general counsel for the NAACP, virtually knocked the props from under the State's objective when he made a motion to have the court strike the testimony of one witness from the record and then declared:

CALLS STATE'S EVIDENCE IRRELEVANT

"The fact that one or any number of white people have never been called for jury service has no bearing whatsoever on this case.

"Our pleas in abatement are directed at the contention that no Negroes have ever served on a jury, and that no Negroes have been called for jury service."

Judge Ingram, however, overruled the defense and the defense objection.

Meanwhile the whereabouts of Howard Dome, the court stenographer who was employed by the defense, was still a mystery. The session Saturday was delayed one hour due to his sudden disappearance, while unconfirmed rumors spread that he may have been the victim of foul play.

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6 Jurors Chosen For Race Riot Trial

The Courier-Journal Louisville, Ky.

Lewrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 5 (AP)—A sixth juror to try 25 Columbia Negroes for participating in last February's racial disturbance was chosen in Circuit Court today, but he almost got away. Fri. 9-6-46

The juror—A. J. Jourdan, 60-year-old farmer—was dismissed by the court on a defense peremptory challenge and was walking out the door when defense counsel expalined the challenge was an error.

Jourdan was ordered into the jury box despite his pleas that he was physically unable to serve.

73-Year-Old Farmer 4th Juror for Columbia Trial

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Tues. 8-27-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 26.—A 73-year-old farmer raised in Illinois was chosen today as the fourth juror in the trial of the Columbia Negroes. He is John Pigg. Questioned by defense counsel Maurice Weaver, Pigg testified he had no prejudice against Negroes. He said Negroes should have the same rights as white citizens. The elderly farmer said he moved to Tennessee with his family when he was 15 years old. He stated he never belonged to a church.

He was the 133d venireman questioned in the dramatic two weeks battle for a jury between attorneys for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People and state's counsel.

Sitting with Pigg in the jury box are W. E. Staggs, farmer; Wash King, farmer and former member of the United Mine Workers of America, and Segel Davis, carpenter, recently returned from two years in the Yukon.

Upon the shoulders of these men and eight yet to be chosen rest the burden of weighing the state's charge of attempt to commit murder lodged against 25 leading Columbia Negro citizens. The charge grew out of the Negro community's armed resistance to a white lynch mob on Feb. 25.

There is a general resentment among white citizens of Lawrence County against being called for jury service in this case. Large numbers of local white folks, including the Lawrenceburg mayor, made formal protest against the State action of transferring the case here from Columbia. The defense had asked the trial be moved to Nashville, but this was ruled out by Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram.

Raymond M. Johnson, Joe W Eckert, and Walter Shaffer, prospective jurors, expressed their opposition to serving on the trial jury this morning. By failure to appear in court when called, Judge Ingram levied $25 fines against the three.

Two other veniremen were given similar fines earlier and one was ordered to jail for 10 days. The sentences were later rescinded.

Clarence Brown, a defendant is still confined in the local jail. Judge Ingram ordered his $5,000 bail forfeited and a new bail of $10,000 set last week when the defendant failed to appear in court due to illness. Tues. 8-27-46

Brown was brought to court in custody of Deputy Sheriff. He is being treated by a county physician.

Negro Riot Trial Ready For Testimony

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 19. (AP)—Circuit court, after six weeks of jury selection, was set to begin testimony today in the trial of 25 Columbia Negroes for participation in last February's racial disorders.

Before the trial was moved here from nearby Columbia, a hearing of several weeks' duration was held there on defense pleas in abatement.

The Negroes face charges ranging from assault with intent to commit murder and accessory before the fact.

The 13th (alternate) juror for the all-white jury was chosen only after 250 defense peremptory challenges were exhausted and the court had questioned more than 500 prospects. A score of the veniremen were Negroes, but the state challenged all of them.

Counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is conducting the defense.

Last February's flareup in Columbia saw the death of two Negroes and the wounding of a dozen other persons, including four policemen. State highway patrolmen and units of the State Guard were called in.

Shift of the trial to Lawrenceburg was resisted by local officials as well as defense counsel, although defense attorneys had petitioned for a change of venue. Several other Negroes are awaiting trial in Columbia on similar charges.

Attorneys Clash Over Beating In Racial Trial

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 25.—(AP)—A member of defense counsel in the trial of 25 Negroes charged with attempted murder in the February disorders at Columbia, Tenn., declared in court Tuesday: "We will not stand for persecution in a democracy."

The white attorney, Maurice Weaver, of Chattanooga, retained by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, added: "We are offereing testimony . . . to let the jury know what kind of democracy is going on in these counties."

The remarks were made during a heated exchange with District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus after Weaver had introduced testimony that the fourth state witness had been "beaten" by law oficers.

Bumpus objected when the fourth witness, Alexander Bullock a Negro, testified that he had been beaten by Columbia Constable T. I. Shaw and a state highway patrolman he identified only as "Mr. Smith" after he had been arrested in connection with the disorders last February 25.

"Throughout the examination of the first three state witnesses," Weaver said, "the attorney general has asked each of them if he had been attacked. They said they had not been attacked by city and county officers. Here's a witness who was hit and beaten and could identify his assailants. He volunteered the information to the attorney general but nothing has even been done."

Bumpus replied: "I only learned 10 minutes ago the names of the persons who struck Bullock." He added that Weaver knew he had made a statement "that is not true."

Four Columbia constables were wounded in the shooting.

TENN. DEFENSE LAWYER DENOUNCES JUDGE'S ACTION

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

New York, N.Y. Fri. 9-13-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 12.—Dr. Leon A. Ranson, former dean of the Howard law school and defense counsel in the trial of the Columbia Negroes, stood up in a tense courtroom today and for 10 minutes hurled a series of denunciations at Judge Joe M. Ingram's action in limiting defense questions to veniremen.

Ransom asked that the nine men in the jury box be excluded from the room during his argument. Then he cited the judge's ruling forbidding counsel to quiz prospective jurors on matters of opinion, race prejudice, membership in the Ku Klux Klan and all matters of law.

That action, the Negro attorney declared, **"deprives the defendants of a fair and impartial trial by a jury in violation of their constitutional rights."**

Judge Ingram leaned forward with obvious irritation as Ransom recited a long list of arbitrary rulings during the last two weeks.

Ransom vigorously scored the court's procedure of lining up 15 or more veniremen in a group and questioning them en masse in such a way as to hinder counsel and the 25 Negro defendants from observing **"the manner of the individuals while they are being examined."**

"The defendants," he said, "object to the manner and demeanor of the court in questioning the group of veniremen gathered at the rail for the reason that when a venireman declares he is so prejudiced he cannot give the defendants a fair and impartial trial, your honor's face colors and your honor demonstrates obvious irritation, and therefore examines the veniremen in the presence of the other veniremen in such a tone of voice, and with such inflections and emphasis on certain words as to show your honor's irritation and provocation with the veniremen for having related to the court facts that might disqualify the veniremen."

Ransom charged the judge with examining prospective jurors in an "atmosphere of seeming hostility to particular veniremen."

"This," he asserted is "not conducive to eliciting the truth from the group of veniremen, but is calculated to suppress free expression by the other veniremen."

Source of prospective jurors' opinions and how they were formed, Ransom declared, were not properly explored.

When Dr. Ransom completed his argument, there were a few long moments of silence. Spectators leaned forward. Judge Ingram turned in his chair.

"The court feels that any rule made by the court is absolutely necessary and imperative," he replied. **"Defense objections are aimed at delay. Objections overruled."**

Completion of the jury is expected tomorrow after the defense uses the last of its remaining 36 peremptory challenges.

Blunted Conscience

The Journal and Guide

A FEDERAL grand jury, after long deliberation on the Columbia (Tenn.) race riot, has found in a 3,900-word report that

Norfolk, Va. Sat. 6-22-46

there was nothing in their testimony (of 390 witnesses) to support charges . . . . of wrongful use of State Highway Patrol and the Tennessee State Guard.

The State Highway Patrol and the Tennessee State Guard, one or both, did destroy private property on a large scale, an action, which it seems to us, is not necessary to carry out an order to disarm the populace. In order to enter a drug store or an undertaking establishment in search of firearms it is not necessary to utterly demolish both places. This happened not only to a drug store and an undertaking establishment, but to numerous other places of business.

A report on the Columbia affair, made after a careful investigation by the conservative Southern Regiona Council, said on the count of property destruction:

> The undertaker's establishment, the barbershop, the dance hall and other places were completely wrecked. Angry and excited members of the State Patrol went through the buildings ruthlessly destroying the furnishings and equipment. White hangers-on, in no way restrained by the State Patrol, added to the destruction.

There is no denying on anybody's part of the destruction of priv property. The surprise is that i justified on the part of a Fed grand jury and the whole machin of law enforcement in Tennessee.

This is evidence that the ci rights of people *not involved* i crime, or disturbances of the peace, are not protected at times by the very people in whose authority the responsibility for that protection

rests

NEGRO JURY PLEA BARRED

Times New York, N.Y. Thur. 8-15-46

Counsel Stopped by Court in Columbia (Tenn.) Racial Case

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 14 (AP)—Counsel for twenty-five Columbia (Tenn.) Negroes facing charges of participating in a racial outbreak there last February was stopped in Lawrence County Circuit Court today when it was sought to prove that the county's 700 Negro citizens had consistently been barred from jury service.

Circuit Judge Moe M. Ingram upheld the contention of Prosecutor Paul F. Bumpus of Columbia that the methods by which the present jury panel—which contains the names of fifteen Negroes—was selected was all that concerned the court in hearing a defense motion to throw out the entire panel. Thurs 8-15-46

Maurice M. Weaver of Chattanooga, an attorney for the defend-

ants, brought Mr. Bumpus to the stand as a witness. Mr. Bumpus acknowledged that in the ten years he had been District Attorney General or assistant he could recall only one Negro being summoned for jury service in Lawrence County and never had he known a Negro to serve on a petit jury.

Aged Tennessee Negro Tells How He Saved Vet From Mob

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Sat. 9-28-46

By Harry Raymond

56a

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 27.—Seventy-six-year old Julius Blair, chief defendant in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes, told a jury and the courtroom audience today the thrilling story of his rescue of a 19-year-old navy veteran and the sailor's mother from an angry lynch mob on Feb. 25.

The elderly Negro, patriarch of the Columbia colored community, was the first witness for the defense. He walked with difficulty to the witness stand. He was in shirt sleeves and wearing a grey vest.

He told his story in a quiet voice—how he worked his way up from bootblack to barber, to drug store owner.

He told how his parents, former slaves, were unable to care for a family of 16 children and how he went into the streets as a boy shining the shoes of white men to help feed the family.

The old Negro said he never knew or felt any bitterness against white people because of their color. He said he never hoped to organize a revolution against white people. He testified he was attending a meeting of a committee raising funds for a new school far from "Mink Slide" when four policemen were shot and wounded there in the dark that night the mob was prowling.

Blair is not only charged with attempting to murder the policemen but also with organizing the alleged attempt. He took the stand after the state closed its case. District Attorney Paul Bumpus put his 30th and final witness on the stand last night. None of the state witnesses identified any of the defendants as the persons alleged to have fired the shots that hit the policemen.

Blair, however, let the court and jury know that the Columbia Negroes had good reason to be armed on that tragic February night.

"A lady came to my store about 1:30 in the afternoon and said a mob was forming to hang her daughter and grandson," he told the court. He identified those sought by the mob as ex-sailor James Stephenson and Stephenson's mother. The Stephensons had been arrested and lodged in jail after James struck a white radio repairman in his mother's defense.

"I wanted to get them out," Blair continued. "I was told the bail was $3,500. Magistrate Denton advised me not to take them out. I told him we were not going to have any more social lynchings in Maury County. I just told him we wanted them, that the jail was no safe place for them. I took them out and advised my son Sol to get them out of town."

Magistrate Denton, who argued against taking the Stephensons out of jail, is C. H. Denton, who appeared earlier in court as state witness. Defense lawyer Z. A. Looby asked the court to allow him to introduce evidence alleging Denton was a leader of a mob in 1933 that lynched Cordie Cheek, 17-year-old Negro youth in Columbia.

Blair told the court how his son and James Bellanfant, defendants, put James Stephenson in an automobile and started up back roads to Bashville, 44 miles away. He exchanged cars twice and finally reached the Nashville railroad station. There they put Stephenson on a train for Chicago.

Blair said he not only saw the white mob on the courthouse square, but was earlier told of the existence of the mob by Magistrate Denton. "I knew the jail didn't amount to anything when a mob was coming," Blair told the jury. "In previous times mobs took people out of jail."

Defense counsel Maurice Weaver asked the old Negro what he meant when he told Denton there would be no "social lynchings." Weaver asked how he intended to keep them down.

"By getting the boy out of the way," Blair replied.

Q. Did you aim to fight the mob?

A. No, I didn't have the strength to do that. I tried to keep down strife.

JAIL CROWDED

Blair told how he was arrested by highway patrolmen after the "Mink Slide" shooting.

"I saw Sheriff Underwood in jail," Blair said. "He said to me: 'Julius, you got too many friends. They can't keep you in jail.' But they did. The jail was so crowded you couldn't sit down." Sat. 9-28-46

Before the defense began introduction of proof, Judge Joe M. Ingram overruled a motion by defense lawyer Z. A. Looby to direct a verdict of "not guilty" for all 25 defendants.

"There is not a scintilla of evidence connecting these defendants with any crime whatsoever," Looby told the court. "Prior to the occurrence (of the shooting) some defendants were seen in "Mink Slide" with weapons. People were not seen in the area at any time."

The defense had 20 witnesses, all Negroes, in court this afternoon awaiting examination.

FAIL TO SELECT JURY FOR TENNESSEE TRIAL

Times New York, N.Y.

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 15—The first day in the selection of a jury for the trial of twenty-five Negroes facing charges arising from the Columbia (Tenn.) racial troubles of last February failed to produce the first member for the trial panel.

Seven persons were examined during the day. The defense used peremptory challenges to excuse three prospective jurors the State had accepted. Fri. 8. 16. 46

The fourth was dismissed by the court, which sustained a defense challenge for cause, and the fifth was dismissed by the court on a State challenge for cause. District Attorney General Paul Bumpus used the first of his 100 peremptory challenges to excuse the sixth, who was J. E. Collier, a Lawrenceburg Negro. He testified that he had signed a petition protesting removal of the case to Lawrenceburg from Maury County. He said he signed the paper because he "thought it might cause trouble among the folks down here."

A second peremptory challenge was used by the State to excuse J. S. Gladney of St. Joseph, who testified under questioning that he was prejudiced against the State "for bringing the case here from Maury County." He said he belived the trial should be held in Maury County, where the alleged offenses took place.

The State moved for dismissal on cause, but was overruled by Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram, whose questioning of Gladney brought testimony to the effect that he could give a fair and impartial hearing if selected to serve on the jury. Fri. 8. 16. 46

Prejudiced Judge Helps Prosecution Stack Tenn. Jury

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Wed. 8-21-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 20.—The state's attempt to pick a deeply prejudiced jury to try 25 Negroes who stood against a Columbia lynch mob last February was given full support today by Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram.

Ingram, who has a perfect one week record of overruling all defense motions, backed District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus' claim that a man could serve on a jury even if he was thoroughly convinced of the defendant's guilt.

Franklin Birdyshaw, the 29th prospective juror questioned, stated flatly he believed the Negroes guilty and must be proved innocent by the defense.

Bumpus argued a half-hour against a defense motion to challenge Birdyshaw for cause. Judge Ingram said the venireman was qualified. The defense had to remove him by peremptory challenge.

Only one juror has been accepted after a week of close examination of 56 veniremen by attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People and state's attorney. He is W. E. Staggs, 64-year-old white farmer.

JIMCROW MENTALITY

An idea of how the cards are being stacked against the defendants who face 20-year prison terms, was illustrated by defense counsel Maurice Weaver's unsuccessful hour long battle to excuse venireman James Turner, 26-year-old farmer, for cause.

Questioned by Weaver, young Turner testified he could not give the same credit to testimony of a Negro as he would to that of a white man. "Why?" asked Weaver.

"Because," Turner replied, "I've lived in the South all my life."

Turner continued to insist under oath he was deeply prejudiced against Negroes.

"Do you know any magic that would erase that from your mind?" asked Weaver.

"No," the venireman declared. "Maybe I could if I associated with them (Negroes) for a long time."

Weaver quizzed the young farmer further on his opinions on Dixie Jimcrow. Turner could not explain why it existed.

"That's the way it is," Turner said. **"But it shouldn't be."**

Turner testified he was convinced the Negroes were responsible for the February Columbia disturbances and added **"it would take plenty of convincing to prove them innocent."**

The defense introduced newspaper clippings which Turner said he had read, quoting Bumpus as saying his efforts in the trial were to put down "insurrection" and "criminal elements" in Columbia and the nation.

Turner said part of his opinion on the case has been formed by reading this account.

A DIXIE JUDGE'S RULING

Judge Ingram ruled Turner was a qualified juror. The defense used its 13th peremptory challenge to eliminate Turner.

Another venireman, John Henkle, an auto mechanic, testified: "I just couldn't give them (the defendants) justice. We must hear the bad things they do. They are a mean race of people."

Judge Ingram flatly refused to excuse Henkle for cause. Finally, after long and bitter argument between defense counsel Dr. L. A. Ransom and the State's Attorney, Henkle was excused. The venireman was eliminated, however, only after the defense pulled all props from under state arguments.

For more than a week the 25 defendants have been commuting 66 miles a day from their homes in Columbia by auto caravan to be in court. Wed. 8-21-46

They have to carry their lunches and eat in the courtroom during the noon recess because there are no restaurants that serve Negroes in Lawrenceburg.

Columbia Race Trial May Be Postponed

The Birmingham News
13 Birmingham, Ala.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 11—(AP)—Trial of 25 Negroes facing felony charges in connection with racial disturbances four months ago may be postponed beyond the Aug. 6 date set for the trial at neighboring Lawrenceburg, it appeared today.

Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram granted a motion by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People yesterday for postponement of the trial of two other defendants—to be held separately—until the November term of court. Thur. 7-11-46

The NAACP, representing the defendants, gave as the reason the illness of Thurgood Marshall, of New York, general counsel. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus, opposing the motion, said it "wouldl mean probably a year's delay" in trying the other 25.

Afterward Z. Alexander Looby, of Nashville, a NAACP attorney, told the court he would have additional motions seeking abeyance of the court's ruling last week to transfer trial of the 25 to Lawrenceburg.

He said "We have information now that we feel would have had substantial influence in the court's decision had it been in our possession when the matter was heard."

The NAACP asked removal of the trial from Maury County, of which Columbia is the county seat, but protested setting it at Lawrenceburg. Later numerous Lawrenceburg citizens, including Mayor R. O. Downey, vigorously protested the plan to hold the trial there.

The defendants face charges of assault with intent to murder or accessory before the fact growing out of disturbances in which two Negroes died and 11 other persons were injured at Columbia last February. Thur. 7-11-46

Only One Juror Found For Race Riot Case

Courier Journal
Louisville Wed 8-21-46

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Aug. 20 (AP)—Selection of a jury in the

Columbia, Tenn., racial-disorders case was at a virtual standstill today, eight days after examination of prospective jurors began.

Louisville Ky.

One of two jurors approved by both prosecution and defense was excused last night after the juror's wife had suffered a stroke. The lone juror selected thus far is W. E. Staggs, a farmer.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Columbia Defense Counsel Facing Uphill Battle

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

By OLLIE STEWART

AFRO Staff Correspondent

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Like General Charles DeGaulle, who proclaimed that "France may have lost a battle but not the war," defense lawyers for the 25 persons under indictment here picked themselves up off the floor after three knockdowns last week and grimly announced: Sat.

"We've lost three motions but we're filing another one on Monday—this time asking for a change of venue." 6-29-46

Hearing on the change of venue motion which seeks a new site for the trial of the 25 persons charged with being accessories before the fact and attempted murder in the first degree, during the February outbreak, will probably last all week.

Not Expecting Change

If a change of venue should be granted, the most surprised people in the world would be the defense attorneys—and this correspondent.

"OPERATION MAURY COUNTY" is no pushover.

This week's three losses were expected. Judge Joe M. Ingram teed off by over-ruling the pleas in abatement to quash the indictments he warmed up by denying the plea in misnomer in the case of William Pillow then made it three in a row by over-ruling a motion for severance of the cases.

The pleas in abatement hearing brought to the witness stand some colorful characters and testimony. The defense tried to have the all-white grand jury indictments thrown out on the grounds that colored citizens have been systematically excluded from local jury service.

Tax Books Introduced

Tax books were brought into court showing names with the letter "C" behind them—but the man who kept the books said he didn't have the slightest idea what the "C" stood for. A four-year-old child who nodded or shook his head to indicate "Yes" or "No" was brought in to prove that when names of jurymen were picked out of a box, colored had nothing to do with it. Afro-American

The child unhesitatingly admitted that when he put his little hand in and drew out a name, he had no idea who was white and who was colored; and the fact that all turned out to be white was a coincidence. Baltimore, Md.

To make a long story longer, the defense called 223 witnesses without finding one who had heard of a colored man on the jury in Maury County since 1901—and never on the grand jury. The State called about 100 witnesses, but none of them ever saw a colored man on the jury. Sat. 6-29-46

Asked to Be Excused

However, they knew of several who had been summoned, they said, but had asked to be excused, which proved that colored names were on the jury list and everything was on the up and up as far as selecting juries was concerned.

Judge Ingram stated in his decision: "The court finds from an examination of the 1943 tax books that there is nothing or no indication of any kind designating the color of any citizen or taxpayer."

Thurgood Marshall had found names with "C" behind them in the tax books of 1935-40—but these books were not allowed to be admitted as evidence.

The decision stated further: "On further indisputable evidence the list of prospective members for the February, 1946, circuit court grand jury contained the names of ten colored persons.

"The fact that numerous citizens of the colored race testified that they had never served on a jury, and had never been summoned for jury service, is not conclusive that colored have been excluded from jury service, and particularly is this true in view of the fact that it appears conclusively that some colored were summoned for jury service for that particular term of court under investigation."

Appeal Is Planned

There you have it. Maury County has proved that the all-white grand jury was chosen according to law and the court has agreed. Defense lawyers were expecting this and have already indicated that they intend to argue in higher courts.

It is almost a certainty that the U.S. Supreme Court will eventually be asked to review the case.

If, as is expected, the motion for a change of venue is denied, the trial of the defendants will begin either the first or second week in July—but the picking of a jury is expected to last for weeks.

Defense attorneys include Thurgood Marshall, NAACP general counsel, and L. A. Ransome of Washington, also on the NAACP legal staff; Z. Alexander Looby, Nashville attorney, and Maurice Weaver, white lawyer from Chattanooga.

Tenn. Judge Jails Juryman Claiming Bias at Riot Trial

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

Sat. 4-31-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — Incensed by evidences that local veniremen are dodging jury service after Charles Williams, white, admitted professing prejudice against the defendants to avoid selection, Judge Joe M. Ingram fined the man $50 and sentenced him to 10 days in jail, Wednesday.

Williams's unreal profession of rabid prejudice was brought out under gruelling cross-examination by NAACP defense attorneys for 25 defendants under indictment in connection with the Columbia race riot of last February.

Coaching Suspected

His answers to questions by defense counsel indicated that he had heard such a profession would get him excused or had been coached in such a way as to make his answers cause the defense to use a challenge to have him excused.

In the delaying tactics of defense lawyers, an attempt is being made to have as many members of the present panel excused as possible, while the State hopes all of the defense's 200 challenges will be used in so doing.

Williams was taken directly to jail from the courtroom but **defense attorneys are asking that he be brought back into court in an effort to pin down the source of suspected coaching.**

2 Out of 97 Chosen

Only two jurors have been selected during the week since examination of prospects began, while 97 members of the 312-man panel have been questioned.

Both of those placed in the jury box are white, although seven of 15 colored prospects included in the panel have been examined. Five of these were excused on peremptory challenges of the State, one was dismissed because he is not a property owner and the other because of poor health.

Technically, three jurymen have been accepted by both State and defense attorneys but the second man to be placed in the jury box was excused next day after his wife suffered a stroke.

Challenges 19 to 7

NAACP defense attorneys have obtained the removal of 19 prospects on challenges, the State has excused seven on challenges, 27 have been dismissed because of illness, five for occupational reasons, nad 39 have been excused by the court. The Afro-American

Observers state that selection of the jury may take an additional month since the defense has used only a tenth of its challenges while a third of the panel is exhausted—and more prospects will have to be called. Baltimore, Md

For the first time during proceedings here, Judge Ingram upheld a defense plea, Wednesday, in connection with the attempt of the State to have a colored prospect removed because of a previous court conviction, which normally disqualifies a venireman.

The conviction was handed down on charges of attempted criminal assault but a higher court reversed the ruling and subsequent hearing is not scheduled during this term of court, NAACP attorneys argued. Sat. 8-31-46

The second of the two jurymen was accepted by the defense as one ofthe "fairest available" on the basis of his amiable association with colored in a CIO miners' union.

Tenn. Trial Shifted to New Race-Hate County

Daily Worker

By Harry Raymond

New York, N.Y.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 2.—Judge Joe M. Ingram this afternoon ordered the trial of 25 Negro defendants moved to Lawrenceburg, 34 miles south of here, where defense attorneys charged race hatred is rampaging with even more sinister vigor than in Columbia.

Lawrenceburg, near the Alabama border, is the county seat of Lawrence County. Wed 7-3-46

It was on the basis of affidavits by State's Attorney Paul F. Bumpus that Judge Ingram changed the venue.

Judge Ingram announced he expected the case of the 25, all charged with attempt to commit murder, will be on the Lawrenceburg Circuit Court calendar for trial about Aug. 6.

NEW CASES

Meanwhile, attorneys for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People will open pleas of abatement in Columbia July 5 in the case of William Piplow and Lloyd Kennedy, Negroes, indicted separately on charges of assault with attempt to commit murder in the first degree. They will demand, as in the case of the 25, that the indictment be quashed because Negroes were barred from service on the jury which brought in the indictment.

Although pleas of abatement were denied, after five weeks of testimony and argument, in the case of the 25, defense counsel declared they would again attack the jimcrow jury system in the cases of Pollow and Kennedy and in five other indictments not yet called for trial. It is expected that change of venue arguments will also be presented in behalf of the remaining defendants.

In fact, the jimcrow situation was considered so bad in Lawrence County, that defense lawyers Maurice Weaver moved to withdraw the change of venue plea and take chances of trying the case of the 25 in Columbia. The Judge overruled this motion.

"It is the feeling of the defendants in this case," Weaver declared, "on information gathered that if race hatred and bigotry is rampant in Maury County (of which Columbia is county seat) then it is doubly bad in Lawrence County.

"While we are not attempting to cast a glow of light over Maury County, we are casting a cloak of darkness on Lawrence County. Race hatred and bigotry is even more deeply rooted in Lawrence County.

"Counsel for the State did admit the defendants could not receive a fair and impartial trial in Maury County. But a worse situation exists in Lawrence County."

District Attorney Bumpus, failing combat defense evidence of wide- read prejudice against the Negro fendants, conceded the defense arge but moved quickly to hustle the trial off to Lawrenceburg, where few Negroes live, Negroes are actually barred from residing in most of the area around Lawrenceburg.

Bumpus charged the defense was "trifling with the court" when defense lawyers asked the case to be moved to Franklin, in Williamson County, 44 miles from here. "When the defense doesn't get what it wants they want to call the whole deal off," barked Bumpus.

Weaver challenged the State's Attorney's quick change of opinion regarding the situation in Columbia, and his demand that the trial be moved to the Alabama border county. Wed 7-3-46

"Only three days ago," Weaver declared, "Mr. Bumpus was excoriating counsel for defense and these nefarious Communists for besmirching the fair name of Maury County and insisting a fair trial of the defendants could not take place here. Now he damns Maury County himself. But when the District Attorney damns one county and praises another, he makes us suspicious."

Judge Ingram was unmoved by defense pleas that even Columbia, with all its violent race hatred, woulld offer a better site trial of the Negroes who fought off an attempted lynching here Feb. 25 than would the county seat of Lawrence County.

Jury Bias Conceded at Columbia Trial

The Afro-American

Baltimore, Md.

Defense Plans Intensified After Grand Jury Fails to Indict Whites

Sat. **By OLLIE STEWART** 6-22-46

AFRO Staff Correspondent

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — After calling 217 Maury County citizens who, though qualified for jury service by being adults, males and householders, have never been called for jury service, defense attorneys for the 31 persons under indictment here switched their fire in the direction of white witnesses just before the week-end recess.

Previously, Thurgood Marshall, NAACP lawyer, had announced that he was prepared to call every one of the 10,000 Maury County colored eligibles, if necessary, to prove that colored citizens have systematically been barred from jury service.

After the 217th had given testimony, the State's attorney conceded that the defense could put on the stand many others who had never heard of colored people serving on juries, and was given a day's recess in which to prepare his defense.

Whites Admit Truth

His defense was in the form of white witnesses. But ironically enough, the testimony of two of these witnesses strengthened the case for the defense attorneys.

Thurgood Marshall drew from the Maury county sheriff, J. J. Underwood, the admission that he had never seen a colored man on a local jury. Later, contradicting himself, the sheriff asserted that colored had been called for jury service.

Involved in 1933 Lynching

Magistrate C. Hayes Denton, likew ,siaed dutyos likewise, admitted he knew of no case in which colored persons served on local juries.

He is the man who was magistrate when Cordy Cheek was lynched in 1933—and whose car was reported to have been one of the two which brought a group to the vicinity of Fisk University, where Cheek was picked up for his fatal ride.

Also Seeking Change of Venue

Defense strategy by Thurgood Marshall and Maurice Weaver, white attorney from Chattanooga, is now unfolding.

They want, first, to have the grand jury indictment thrown out on the ground that colored citizens are not used for jury service; and second, they want a change of venue. The Afro-American

Marshall stated Friday that, in his estimation, "testimony on jury duty and change of venue will be completed by Friday (June 21); then there will be an interval of a week or more before a decision is made on these two points."

Threats to Counsel Revealed

This means, in all probability, that the actual trial of the 32 defendanst will not begin before early July. Baltimore Md.

Weaver announced that his life has been threatened, and Howard Dome, court stenographer, admitted that he heard the threat. Taking precautions, Weaver and NAACP attorneys do not spend their nights in Columbia, but commute to and from Nashville for the trial. Sat. 6-22-46

No Federal Indictments

Meanwhile, defense action has been intensified following the report on June 14 by the Federal grand jury in Nashville that it failed to find any evidence of civil rights violat oisnd....bt rights violations during the Feb. 25-26 disorders.

Announcing its action, the jury said that questioning of 390 witnesses failed to support charges of illegal search and seizure, brutality by arresting officers, undue detention of prisoners or wrong use of the State highway patrol and the Tennessee National

Reports Termed False

Stating its action in a 3,900-word report, the jury charged further that the circulation of "falsehoods and half-truths" about the "riot" was a technique "designed to foster racial hatred and array class against class."

The jury's action was endorsed by Federal Judge Elmer D. Davies, to whom the report was submitted, who sai at the jurors' action should reassurance to those of both who sincerely desire to live er in peace and ha mony."

Pres ked to Intervene

Imme thereafter, Walter White, NAACP executive secretary, assailed the jury's report, which was based on a two-and-one-half month investigation, in telegrams to President Truman and Attorney General Tom Clark.

In his wire to President Truman, he said, "The collapse of Federal machinery for justice in Tennessee makes it imperative that you alert the Justice Department and other Federal agencies to furnish sufficient force to protect colored and members of other minorities in the exercise of their Constitutional rights in the South.

"The grand jury report on the Tennessee case is another instance of failure to enforce law in State dominated by notorious Crum-McKellar machine."

Terrorism Seen Ahead

To Attorney General Clark he said:

"The shocking report of the all-white Federal grand jury has jeopardized the safety of every citizen in the country, particularly colored persons and members of other minorities.

"The failure to induct the perpetrators will be interpreted as a signal by State officials and the Ku Klux Klan throughout the South to terrorize colored communities during the coming primary elections without fear of Federal interference."

No Question of Evidence

"There has been in existence at all times, photographic and eyewitness evidence of actual violations of Federal rights by State highway patrol and State guard.

"The finding of the grand jury demonstrates that it ignored the evidence or that the FBI failed to furnish the full facts.

The collapse of the Federal machinery for justice in Tennessee places upon the Federal Government the duty to take the immediate steps necessary to protect the lives and liberty of colored citizens and members of other minorities.

Added Protection Asked

"We call upon you to immediately furnish adequate forces of Federal law enforcement officers in the South to protect the exercise of Constitutional rights.

"The grand jury instead of performing its directed job of locating the criminals devoted itself to a denunciation of those who exposed the crime.

"We reaffirm the essential facts in the pamphlet and will prosecute the defense with renewed vigor."

Columbia Defense To Ask Adjournment

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Wed. 7-10-46

Special to the Daily Worker

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 9.—Attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People announced today they would ask Circut Court Judge Joe M. Ingram to adjourn the trials of the Columbia Negroes until September.

The plea for adjournment will be made tomorrow in Maury County Court by attorneys Z. Alexander Looby and Maurice Weaver. Grounds for the plea is the sudden illness of Thurgood Marshall NAACP chief counsel.

Marshall is under medical treatment for a serious infection and has been confined to bed in New York for more than a week.

The first case called for trial is that of William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy, charged with assault with attempt to commit murder in the first degree. Trial date was set for Monday, July 15 in Maury County Courthouse

The trial of 25 Negros, charged along with Pillow and Kennedy with attempt to commit murder for their armed resistance to a lynch mob Feb. 25, has been ordered to begin in Lawrence County Court, Lawrenceburg, 33 miles south of here on Aug. 6.

Judge Ingraham moved the trial of the 25 to the southern county over the protests of defense counsel who charged anti-Negro sentiment was stronger in Lawrenceburg than in Columbia. The defense had sought through a change of venue plea to transfer the trial to Nashville, 44 miles north of here, or Franklin, in Williamson County, 25 miles away.

Lobby and Weaver declined to make a change of venue plea in the case of Pillow and Kennedy. These defendance are accused of firing on a white lynch mob and local police.

Prosecutor Inflames Tenn. Juror

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Wed. 8-28-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 27.—Maurice Weaver, defense counsel in the trial of the Columbia Negroes, charged today District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus was inflaming the minds of members of the jury.

Weaver moved quickly for a mistrial following a heated exchange between Dr. Leon A. Ransom, also defense lawyer and Bumpus. Judge Joe M. Ingram, who has constantly ruled in behalf of the prosecution during two full weeks of questioning of prospective jurymen, overruled the mistrall motion.

The clash of counsel came while Dr. Ransom, a Negro and former dean of the Howard Law School, was quesioning Joe W. Eckert, white farmer and 146th venireman quizzed.

Eckert testified he had discussed the Columbia case with neighbors and talked about what to do with the 25 Negro defendants.

"The colored should stay in their place," declared the venireman. "They haven't got the same rights as a white man in Tennessee."

Dr. Ransom moved to disqualify Eckert for cause. This was the fourth motion by the defense to disqualify the farmer for prejudice. The Judge quickly overruled them all.

District Attorney Bumpus attempted to limit Dr. Ransoms questioning. Bumpus angrily declared thes man was "clearly qualified." He charged the defense was wasting time and causing inconvenience to the four jurors sitting in the box.

Dr. Ransom questioned Eckert further. The venireman testified he **"sometimes"** believes an indictment is sufficient to show guilt of defendant.

"Is this one of the times?" The venireman was asked. "It might be," Eckert replied. The defense moved again to disqualify the farmer. The motion was overruled and the defense removed him with its 30th peremptory challenge.

Ecker left the witness stand declaring **"I wouldn't sit on a jury with a colored man."**

But the Judge was not so kind to Clarence Brown, a defendant who had his $5,000 bond lifted last week when illness prevented him from appearing in court. Brown was released from jail this morning when the defense posted a new $10,000 bond. The bond was posted by Julius Blair and James Morton, defendants and James Martin, a Columbia Negro. Wed. 8-28-46

Charles Chaplin once made

today.

56a 1946

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Twin-killing At Columbia Feb. 28 Not Like Daily Papers Reported

Globe and Independent Nashville, Tenn.

Fri. 10-18-46

Lawrenceburg, Tenn.—By the end of the hectic trial of 25 Columbia men, arrested and indicted on charges growing out of the threat of a mob to lynch a Negro mother and her son last February, Negro newspapers had gotten and laid bare a "different" story regarding the murder of William Gordon and James (Digger) Johnson in the Maury County jail on Thursday afternoon, February 28.

56a

The story came from Napoleon Stewart who was one of the three men who were hustled into a room away from the scores of other arrested men and presumably for "third degree" treatment by the highway patrol. 10-18-46

If the story told by Napoleon Stewart can be believed, then the daily newspapers of the country palmed off on the public one of the biggest hoaxes they have been guilty of, down through the years, and especially when they engage in trying to give the public a report on interracial troubles. Guilty also of contributing to the planned output of misinformation for the public is an interracial organization composed of white and colored intellectuals, which was formed in the South, it is believed, to sabotage the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Both the daily papers and the group of intelectuals had the same story: that Johnson, Gordon and Stewart had been taken to the room which became the "death chamber" for two of the men, to be questioned and that they made an effort to shoot their way out of the place when they found some loaded guns handy.

All reasonable people thought it strange that the men who later were murdered with gunfire by the highway patrol, otherwise known as the state "department of safety," should make an attempt to shoot their way out of jail while the town of Columbia was filled with state militia and highway patrolmen. It seemed an act of desperation such as would not be attempted by either of the men, merely a result of "being questioned." There has been very little reference to the "attempted escape" following the bizarre report of it by the daily press an othe press association. This may have been because a fair-minded radio reporter expressed to the nation his doubt of the truthfulness of the report. He was Martyn Ag[illegible] on the air over ABC at 7:00 each morning. At any rate, pains were taken to suppress the story. And the great newspapers of the country apparently aware of the fact that they had been "hoaxed" by it dailies of the area and the press associations sent their ablest writers to Lawrenceburg to cover the trial, and in a large measure made up for the untruthful reports they had circulated prior to Mr. Agronsky's revealing comments on the jail murders.

One of the newspaper accounts of the events leading up to the twin-killing deserves being quoted ahead of the story told by Napoleon Stewart. Here is what it said:

"In the room were three stacks of confiscated weapons. One stack of guns was in the corner near Gordon. Another was just behind Johnson's chair and the third stack was behind the bed (R. T.) Darnell (deputy sheriff) was talking on the telephone and (Ed) Pennington (deputy sheriff) was lying on the bed just prior to the escape attempt.

"The reporter (the one telling this one) had stepped across the hall into another room ... when the firing broke out." Globe and Independ

"According to Darnell, Johnson seized a rifle and as the deupty (Darnell) started toward the Negro, Gordon fired at him with a rifle he had taken from the stack near him. Attracted by the gunfire, highway patrolmen (no names given) rushed back to the door of the room and opened fire. Shots ricocheted through the room and out into the hallway and some blasted away large chunks of plaster (etc, etc) (While the above item doesn't say so, it might be mentioned that Johnson and Gordon were shot to death.) Nashville, Tenn.

"(Napoleon) Stewart, who had not been involved in the shooting was unharmed the firing ceased, but as one of the patrolmen passed him he attempted to snatch the officer's gun and was knocked to the floor by the patrolman. (Name of "patrolman" not given by the reporter.) Fri. 10-18-46

The leading paragraph in the story from which the above quotations are given, told of a new contingent of 250 State Guards arriving in Columbia "after an escape attempt of the Maury County jail yesterday (February 28) resulted in the fatal shooting of two Negroes being held for questioning in connection with the racial disorders that began here Monday."

With the above version of the tragedy at the Maury County Jail as told in the daily, whose publisher the eminent George Seldes called "Speaker of the House of Lords" in his book "Lords of the Press" it seems only fair that Napoleon Stewart, who unlike the daily paper reporter, was an actual witness of what took place, should also be recorded. Stewart's version of what happened, as told in the Baltimore Afro-American, and written by one of the best reporter's of that famous weekly, is on page 3 of the October 12 issue of the paper and is as follows:

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. — Two men arrested among 103 persons on the morning of last Feb. 26 at the height of a raid by State Highway patrolmen and guardsmen in the Mink Slide area, were later shot to death in what became a controversal question of murder or suicide during the trial here.

Attorney-General Paul H. Bumpus in one of his typical fanciful statements contended "a couple of men committed suicide in the jail" when reference was made to the slaying of James Johnson and William Gordon.

Napoleon Stewart, one of the acquitted defendants, who was the third man in the sheriff's office that day, tells this story, however:

MURDER TALK HEARD

"The three of them were taken from their cells and seated in this room on a cot. In the corners were countless guns which patrolmen had confiscated from colored homes during the day.

"All three had heard patrolmen talking of killing them and had been severely beaten when arrested and brought into the jail.

"The patrolmen stood just outside the door with guns poised.

VICTIMS'S FATAL DECISION

"Seeing all this, Johnson decided to put up a fight and reached for one of the countless "loaded" guns piled in corners of the sheriff's office.

"A single shot was fired but Stewart cannot say whether Johnson fired it or not. The arm of an unarmed deputy was grazed and patrolmen began blazing away from outside the door.

"Johnson's body was riddled and the lower half of that of Gordon's, who sought to hide under the cot, was nearly cut away by the withering gunfire of patrolmen.

ONE AGAINST SEVEN

"Stewart was not hit, he said, because he was in a corner out of the line of patrolmen's gunfire and stood with both hands up when they re-entered the room.

"At least seven patrolmen, led by Chief Lynn Bomar, rushed into the room, buffeted him about, and pressed him into a corner while they viewed their handiwork.

"A small, stunted officer eased up to him, Stewart said, striking him a blow against the face and knocking him against another officer who shouted he (Stewart) was trying to grab his gun.

BOMAR'S BRUTALITY

Bomer then knocked him to the floor, placed one foot on his neck, and vulgarly dared him to breathe while all other patrolmen stood with guns pointed at his head waiting for a single whimper."

In Stewart's opinion, the slaying was planned. He cannot understand, he asserts, why police officers would leave three prisoners in a room with numerous loaded weapons, go outside and stand with poised guns talking about killing them. Fri. 10-18-46

Attorney-General Bumpas's remark about suicide thus assumed new significance.

Sol Blair of Columbia Tenn. Letter to

The Worker

SOLOMON BLAIR

Mr. Solomon Blair,
Blair's Barber Shop,
East Eighth St., New York
Columbia, Tenn. N York

Dear Sol: Sun. 7-14-46

I came home to New York on July 4. And my wife, meeting me at the airport, asked how you folks were celebrating Independence Day in Columbia. I told her you were really going to town, doing your best to make the Declaration of Independence a living document.

But everybody is asking questions. "How are they coming with the trial?" "Do you think the lawyers are safe?" "How are the defendants holding up?" "Does the NAACP need any help down there?"

I tell them not to worry about the lawyers, the defendants and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. I tell them what we know: that you are going to lick this case; that no lynch mobs are ever going to prowl in Columbia again. Sun. 7-14-46

★

SURE, I TELL MY FRIENDS, the entire Negro community in Columbia needs help. All civilized people should support your fight against the charge of "attempt to commit murder." You fought off an ignorant and prejudiced lynch mob on the night of Feb. 25. The people all around are beginning to understand that. You people were and are fighting for democracy.

Yet it is hard to make some New Yorkers understand what is going on in Columbia. Some think your case, shoved off to Lawrenceburg, is just another lawsuit. Everybody in Columbia knows different. It's a fight against Jimcrow. That's the true story I am trying to tell.

A THEATRICAL PRODUCER, a man whom I consider the greatest actor appearing on the American stage in my time, told me American writers have fallen down miserably on the Columbia story.

"The NAACP has got hold of a celestial crowbar in Columbia," he told me. "Here is where we start to pry loose the whole rotten social structure of second class citizenship for Negroes. Just imagine what Emile Zola or Will Shakespeare would do with this."

We discussed how these great writers would have handled the story. Zola, I said, would stir the world with another **I Accuse.**

"Shakespeare," said the great actor, "would be writing about heaven's black cherubims striding the blast. He would make good men angry."

But the news from Lawrenceburg, Tenn., where Maury County officials plan to move the trial, indicates good men are showing some righteous anger.

★

ONE HUNDRED Negro citizens of Lawrence County, according to a telegram I received from Nashville, have told Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram, "we conscientiously believe it would be impossible for the Negroes to receive a fair and impartial hearing before a Lawrence County jury."

White business and professional men in Lawrenceburg oppose washing Maury County's dirty linen in their courthouse.

A change of venue from Lawrence County is obviously the order of the day.

Leaders of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People told me they would leave no stone unturned in efforts to move the trial out of race-prejudiced Lawrence County. Every fair-minded American citizen, knowing the facts, will back the NAACP in this campaign. And it appears the fight has just begun.

★

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE are asking about your father, Julius Blair. They send him regards. But few know him as I do—a staunch fighter at the age of 75.

Give my best wishes to all the defendants. And also accept greetings from the editors and all the writers on The Worker. We will keep up the fight.

We know you and your father will keep up the fight for justice. And so will old Meade Johnson, and Jim Morton, and the Rev. Calvin Lockridge. And the 10 war veterans: James Bellanfant, Clarence Brown, Clifford Edwards, Luther Edwards, Milton Johnson, Louis Miles Jr., Paul Miles, Early Scott, James Stephenson and Lloyd Kennedy.

Admit Fair Trial Impossible in Columbia

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond Tues 7-2-46

COLUMBIA, (Tenn.), July 1.—The state's attorney conceded today, in face of overwhelming defense evidence on a change of venue plea, that the 25 indicted Columbia Negroes could not receive a fair trial in Maury County.

But he demanded that the trial be moved to Lawrence County, on the Alabama border, which attorneys for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People charged would be an even more prejudiced place to try the defendants than in Columbia.

"It would be worse than jumping from the frying pan into the fire," declared chief defense counsel Z. Alexander Looby.

Looby asserted District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus, having failed to disprove defense evidence that terror against Negroes—and especially against the defendants and their attorneys—is rampant, was attempting to select a worse place to hold the trial.

"The State cannot select a place for the trial," Looby told the court. **"That's what they are attempting to do. For some reason the State wants it in Lawrence County. We don't want it in Lawrence County."** Tues 7-2-46

Judge Joe M. Ingram withheld decision on the change of venue plea until tomorrow morning

Julius Blair, 75-year-old Negro community leader and one of the defendants, said that only six Negro families live in Lawrenceburg, county seat of Lawrence County, 30 miles south of here. He added that Negroes are not permitted to reside in Loretta, leading town in the county.

The most damaging testimony was contained in an affidavit by Jesse Owen, 44-year-old white crane operator.

Owen, a native of Columbia, testified Clarence Witwell, boss of a TVA project, forced him off his job as a crane operator there because he was sympathetic with the framed-up Negroes.

TVA officials told Owen white men had pressed for Owen's dismissal and were threatening violence against him. They told Owen, who went to Washington for his own safety, the men were pressing for time and that it would not be safe for him to remain in Columbia.

Defendants Free, but Jurors Jailed as Tennessee Race Trial Hits Legal Snag

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 17.—(UP)—There are queer legal goings-on in this city, that became the unwilling host for the trial of 25 Negroes charged with inciting last winter's race riot in Columbia, Tenn.

For one thing, the defendants, who found friends to pay their bonds, have all been set free, while the jurors, who wish the trial would hurry and start, are all in jail.

That may sound funny, but it's not—especially to juror No. 1, W. E. Staggs, a 60-year-old farmer. Monday he rounded out an even month in the county calaboose.

Staggs was accepted for service the 12-member jury August The twelfth man filed into jail late Monday; now all st await selection of a thirteenth juror who will be called only if one of the others is incapacitated during the expectedly long trial. The law says they can speak to no one who may influence their impartial hearing of the evidence.

Each morning until last week, Staggs and his companions arose and ate a jailhouse breakfast (but probably not prison fare). Now, they are fed outside at a little cafe to which they are marched under guard. For diversion, they may gaze from the barred windows out into the little city that has been home to most of them all their lives.

Over 500 veniremen have paraded into the courthouse since the jury selection began August 15, but both the defense and state have exploited freely jury challenge privileges. **An air of extreme** boredom hangs over the courthouse.

The jurors—who occupy quarters on the second floor of the jail over the cells—just sit and talk among themselves. They are getting bored.

There is one diversion. Mail. They are allowed to receive any amount, but all of it is censored.

The barber, who makes a daily call, is a welcome visitor. He brings gossip from the shop downtown, but he must watch what he says, because a guard stands close by always.

Lawrenceburg tried to get out of having the trial here, but its petitions had little effect. The case first went to court in Columbia, scene of the racial disorders, but the defense won a change of venue on grounds that feeling against the Negroes was strong so close to **the scene of the incident.**

Witnesses Verify Defendants' Alibis

The Afro-American

'Ringleaders' Outside Area at Time Agreed On

Baltimore, Md.

TRIAL ONE-SIDED

Sat. 10-5-46

'Not Guilty' Verdict for All Demanded

By VINCENT TUBBS
AFRO Staff Correspondent

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. —Led by 76-year-old Julius Bliar, 11 persons called to the stand by defense attorneys by the week's end testified that various individuals among the 25 under indictment were elsewhere at the time of the shooting of the officers for which they are being tried by the State.

The State has set the time of the shooting at between 9:30 and 9:45 on Feb. 25, and alibis set forth in the testimony of three principals and the nine witnesses are established on the basis that:

Julius Blair, charged with being an accessory before the fact, was attending a meeting between 8 and 9 o'clock; Saul Blair was out of town, taking James Stevenson to Nashville at the time of the shooting. The Afro-American

Reliable Witnesses

Meade Johnson was home from 7:30 until next morning; Webster Matthews had a date from 8 until after 11 o'clock;

James Morton was at his home from 8:30 until arrested at 11; Eugene Williams was at home from 8:30 until the next morning.

Witnesses included S. E. Jones, principal of the Columbia High School; Miss Johnnie B. Fulton, supervisor; G. A. Newburn, county agent, and A. J. Armstrong, realtor, who recalled that Julius Blair was at a meeting with them.

Their testimony contradicted that of several colored State witnesses who said they saw Blair among armed men in Mink Slide shortly after 8:30 on the night of the shooting. Baltimore, Md.

Possession of Gun Denied

Meade Johnson and his wife, Sallie, contradicted the testimony of other State witnesses who said he was carrying a double-barreled shotgun in the area an hour before the shooting.

Johnson said he had had no such gun in his hands in 12 years, and his wife corroborated his statement that he was home by 7:30 that evening.

Mrs. Mattie Smith of Mount Pleasant, who was visiting her daughter and son-in-law, the James Mortons, testified that he did not leave the house, as did Mrs. Marcia Mayes who was also there. Sat. 10-5-46

Was Checking Up

Matthews's girl friend, 17-year-old Jennie Arnell, said he was with her and she noted the time "to be sure he wasn't arriving late or leaving too early."

Saul Blair testified in his own behalf that he was in Nashville and first heard of the shooting when officers were beating a deranged man near Nashville station "because our officers had been shot in Columbia."

Johnson was the last of defendants placed on the stand and despite grueling cross examination stated he could not identify persons seen with weapons in the area at the time he closed his business and went home.

Must Prove All Guilty

It is the defense strategem to prove that most of the accused men were neither at nor near the the scene at the time of the shooting.

In such an event, a "not guilty" verdict for all should be returned since all 25 are charged under the same indictment and repeated efforts of the defense to obtain a severance so that the men might be tried separately have been denied.

Some 15 or 20 additional defense witnesses are to be called this week but final arguments are expected to be under way by Wednesday, with conclusion of the trial by Friday.

According to reliable sources, the defense had asked for a directed verdict of "not guilty" at the conclusion of the State's case on Thursbday, but was overruled in an amusing by-play wherein Alexander Looby, attorney, conditioned to expect a denial "seconded the motion" when Judge Ingram overruled the plea.

10-1 for Conviction

Later however, Looby and Bumpus engaged in heated argument over Bumpus's referring to a witness as a n—r woman."

Looby asked that the court reprimand Bumpus for such disrespect to a tax paying citizen and Bumpus retaliated by saying he said "nigra witness" which the judge accepted as not necessitating a reprimand.

The trial is getting wide newspaper coverage from newsmen here from all major colored weeklies and countless large white dailies and news services. From this group, many of whom covered the infamous Scottsboro trial, has come, the sage evaluation that the wise intimidated by officials at the Lawrenceburg Court is not so hostile as it is incompetent, and betting stands at 10 to 1 for convictions which will have to be appealed in higher courts.

9-Day Trial by State

The State rested its case at 9:15 p.m., Thursday, having sought during 9-day testimony by 28 witnesses to prove the defendants' guilt.

Completion of the State's case was highlighted this week by testimony of three high school children brought to court without knowledge or consent of their parents.

The State presented these witnesses in an attempt to prove that certain of these defendants were seen there in area and the Mink Slide area shortly before police officers were allegedly wounded there.

Cross examination, however, revealed that the majority of them had either been beaten or otherwise intimated by officials at the time they made statements identifying some of the defendants as principals in the fray.

Defense Attorney Upbraided

The appalling record of professional indecency by the court and prosecution has been maintained, Attorney General Bumpus daring Maurice Weaver, white defense attorney, to repeat certain statements made outside the court room.

When Weaver sought to have the judge to reprimand Bumpus for this implied threat and intimidation, he was himself upbraided.

Again on Thursday during testimony by Highway Patrol Commissioner Lynn Bomar, Weaver was told any colored man in the room is more respected than he, his work in the case having marked him as a renegade violator of Dixie principles.

Still later Judge Ingram advised Weaver he will be cited in contempt of court if he repeats any question put to a witness during cross examination, a manner of conduct commonly used by lawyers for emphasis.

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

Sizing Up the Tennessee Jury

The Worker New York, N.Y. Sun. 9-22-46

A GLIMPSE AT THE JURORS IN THE COLUMBIA NEGROES' TRIAL

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Maurice M. Weaver, attorney of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People questions a prospective juror:

"Could you go into that jury box assuming the defendants are innocent until proved guilty?" he asks.

"Certainly not," the man in the witness chair replies.

Weaver was probing the conscience of a white man qualified by circuit court judge Joe M. Ingram to sit in judgment of 25 Columbia Negroes who battled a lynch mob Feb. 25. They are charged with "attempt to commit murder."

"Do you believe in the principles of the Ku Klux Klan?" the attorney asks.

"Some of the things they do are very good," the prospective juror answers. There was firmness in his voice.

The man who gave these answers is **W. E. Staggs,** 65-year-old owner of a small farm on Henryville Road, seven and a half miles from Lawrenceburg. Staggs is No. 1 man on the Columbia trial jury.

Staggs testified he would **"believe a white witness before a Negro."**

Prominent business men in this rural community claim Staggs is one of the "fairest" men in Lawrence County. "He will give those colored folks a fair trial," declared C. C. Kelly, former State Senator and leading county Democratic politician.

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No. 2 juror is sharp-featured **Wash King.** He's 60 years old and runs a small farm outside of town. He sweeps the floor in a nearby country school when he's not busy digging a living out of the fertile Tennessee earth.

King testified he once mined coal in Alabama and was a member of the United Mine Workers of America. He worked in the mines with Negroes and believed in the principle of Negro and white unity in the trade union movement.

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Segal Davis, 30-year-old carpenter, sits next to King in the jury box. He claims no prejudice against Negroes and says he would base his verdict on the "evidence." He worked on government projects in the Yukon and is a lieutenant in the Tennessee state guard.

Davis watches the progress of the trial with little emotion. There is no art by which an observer can judge this man's hidden opinions.

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John Pigg, retired farmer, is the oldest member of the Columbia jury. He is 73 and he entered the jury box Aug. 26 wearing faded blue overalls.

"I was raised in Illinois and came here when I was 15 years old," Pigg testified under examination. "I never belonged to any church. . . . They (Negroes) have as good rights under law as white people."

(After five full weeks of dramatic courtroom battle, 12 white men are today in the jury box in Lawrence County court. They will weigh evidence in the trial of 25 leading Negro citizens of Columbia, Tenn. The Negroes say the lynch law and white supremacy is on trial. The state's attorney says he will ask 20-year prison terms. Here is how the jurors who must decide the verdict appear to the Daily Worker on the scene.)

Farmer Pigg's opinions of the Ku Klux Klan are not known to the defendants.

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J. R. Bradley, 29, the youngest juror, testified he worked side by side with the Rev. Calvin Lockridge, defendant in the trial, at Monsanto Chemical Co. plant.

"I can give them (the Negroes) a fair and impartial trial" he told the court.

When advised by defense attorney Weaver the Negroes were accused of shooting and wounding a white policeman, Bradley replied before stepping into the jury box:

"They must have been pretty bad shots if the 25 of them shot at one white policeman and didn't kill him."

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The sixth juror to enter the box was 64-year-old **A. J. Jordan.** Questioned by Judge Ingram Sept. 5, Jordan squirmed in his high-front bib overalls. He did not seem to understand the legal questions of the court. The record shows him saying: "I am a missionary Baptist . . . I am a farmer . . . I never had trouble with anyone . . . I don't know enough about the Ku Klux Klan to say anything for or against it . . . I do not subscribe to the Ku Klux Klan principles of race hate."

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Herbert Patterson, 50-year-old country storekeeper from Henryville, protested his business would go to pot if he was selected as a juror. He was hustled into the jury box. There is no testimony on the record concerning his social opinions and outlook.

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Fifty-eight-year-old **J. J. Cleveland, farmer,** likewise objected as he was ordered into the box as the eighth juror.

"I would give the defendants an impartial trial if I need to," he declared.

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Arthur J. Pollock, 53, No. 9 juror, complained of ill health. He testified he would give a "fair and impartial trial," but the defense lawyers were barred by the court from quizzing him on matters of opinion, race prejudice and understanding of the law:

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Frank Kersteins, carpenter, 62, said he was Roman Catholic and would try the case on "the law and evidence." He is the tenth juror.

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Juror 11 is **Howard Vantiford,** 32, farmer. He entered the box with defense counsel charging his examination by the court was not calculated to elicit "frank, full and complete answers."

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Bill Wilburn, 31, completes the 12-man all-white jury. The court record shows he's a saw mill operator.

Attempts by the defense to elicit more information about this man were barred by the court

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Fearless Attorney Most Hated Man at Tenn. Trial

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md. Sat. 10-5-46

Patrol Chief Boasts of Gestapo Tactics in Terrorizing Mink Slide Residents

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Probably the most hated man in the trial of 25 persons under indictment for complicity in the Columbia riot last February is Maurice Weaver, 34-year-old white Chattanooga NAACP lawyer.

Considered by prosecutor, judge, white witnesses, jurors and local citizens as a renegade violator of provincial principles of "white supremacy," Weaver is a repeated recipient of verbal and tactical abuse.

On at least two occasions during the week's proceedings, the young, steely-eyed lawyer was threatened with physical violence, and in another instance was warned by the judge that he stood on the threshold of being thrown in jail for contempt of court.

Bumpus' Invitation

Early last week, Attorney General Paul Bumpus invited Weaver outside the court room for what he apparently intended should be a fist fight.

When Weaver protested to the court, instead of being upheld in his objection to big, 200-pound Bumpus's threat of physical violence, the judge overruled his objection in what appeared to be assent to Bumpus's threat.

Again, while cross-examing State Highway Patrol Commissioner Lynn Bomar, who was identified to the court as a former All-American end at Vanderbilt University, slight-built young Weaver was again threatened with a beating.

Clash on Testimony

Bomar had testified that he stood with his foot on the neck of Napoleon Stewart, survivor of the slaying of James Johnson and A. Gordon in the Columbia jail, threatening to kill Stewart, too, unless he lay still.

Bomar said he'd heard that Stewart later asserted "they should have killed me," adding his own "I think so, too."

Here, Weaver quickly seized on the attitude of an officer who could give no plausible reason for feeling Stewart should have been killed, too, and in the ensuing exchange was told by Bomar that he (Bomar) has more respect for any colored man in the courtroom than Weaver.

A Tense Moment

Big, red-faced, bald Commissioner Bomar held on to a yard stick used to point to a map being used as an exhibit, and shouted that Weaver had come into Columbia and stirred the trouble boasting he (Weaver) would not need another law suit when this one is finished.

Weaver challenged the witness that because of his extreme dislike for him, he would testify anything, true or untrue, to bolster the State's case, defy him and convict the accused.

For a split second, newsmen and spectators held their breath while Bomar reddened and restrained an obvious desire to crack the young lawyer with the yardstick.

Photographic Evidence

Some two hours later, while Weaver cross-examined Roy H Staggs, Columbia photographer who introduced a photo purported to show tat there was sufficient light to identify police officers on the night of February 25, the judge handed down a ruling unprecedented in court proceedings.

The defense has contended that if Will Willsford, policeman, was shot in Mink Slide on the night of the fracas it was because there was not sufficient light for persons defending themselves there to distinguish him from marauding civilians.

Staggs's photo, which he testified was made on 3-minute exposure, using Verichrome B film and no artificial lighting, plainly shows up the officers' uniforms in such a manner as observers assert is impossible without special film and flash lighting.

Counsel Intimidated

Weaver, utilizing a time-honored tactic of repeating questions to impress the witnesses' answer in the minds of the jurors, was told by the judge that if he ever repeats another question in the court he will be cited in contempt.

His head bloodied but unbowed, the young attorney was forced to halt further questioning, while spectators expressed amusement and the jury sat unmoved by the incident.

No Search Warrants

Bomar admitted when questioned by Z. Alexander Looby of defense counsel that he "did not" have a warrant when he entered the home of James Morton. When asked by Looby: "Did anyone object to your searching the premises?" he answered swaggeringly:

"I went in so fast they didn't have time, and I probably won't have one next time, either." Bomar also admitted defiantly that he did not have search warrants neither when his patrolmen shot locks off doors of colored business houses.

Describing graphically his part in the episode involving the killing of two colored men in jail "while attempting to escape," Bomar boasted:

Gestapo Tactics

"I grabbed Napoleon Stewart by the coat. I told him to lay on the floor and be quiet. I put my foot on his neck. I told him if he didn't lay there I would kill him. He kept trying to get up."

Maurice Weaver, defense counsel, asked Bomar: "This colored boy, you put your foot on his neck, he was not armed?" "No," replied Bomar. "But he told me afterward we should have killed him—and I guess we should have."

When Weaver attempted to show that Bomar's hostility had distorted his testimony, Judge Ingram balked again, as he did when Weaver and Bomar clashed previously, "Let's get on with the law suit."

Call 425 for Jury in Trial Of Tennessee Negroes

562

By Harry Raymond Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 13.—Four hundred and twenty-five prospective jurors were summoned to the pint-sized Lawrence County courtroom today in the opening phase of the trial of 25 leading Columbia Negro citizens who fought off a lynch mob last February.

Litigation in the case, which began May 28 in Maury County with a five-week court battle to outlaw the indictment on grounds that Negroes had been excluded from jury service, reached an abrupt climax when Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered the trial to begin at once. Twelve Negroes appeared on today's jury panel. Daily Worker

Before the roll call today, District Attorney Paul Bumpus was upheld by Judge Ingram in his opposition to a defense move to see the jury list. Judge Ingram also overruled for the second time a defense motion for separate trials for each of the 25 defendants. Wed 8-14-46

The Negro defendants who face 20-year prison terms on a charge of attempt to murder, had to be driven 34 miles in cabs from Columbia to Lawrenceburg for the trial.

STAR CHAMBER ACTION

Steps taken by Judge Ingram smacked of star chamber proceedings. He instructed court attendants to be ready to clear the court of spectators to make room for the prospective jurors. The courtroom has seating capacity for 200.

Three attorneys for the defense: Z. Alexander Looby, and Dr. L. A. Ransom, Negroes, and Maurice Weaver, white—were in court in fighting mood when the case was called this morning. They have been retained by the National Association for Advancement of Colored People.

They continued their attack on the validity of the indictment.

Weeks had already been consumed in defense pleas of abatement, a plea of misnomer in behalf of William Pillow, one of the defendants, motions for separate trials and change of venue.

The case grew out of an attempt of a white mob on Feb. 25 to lynch James C. Stephenson, Navy veteran, and his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson. A white man bought a rope in a Columbia hardware store to hang the mother and son.

DEFEND COMMUNITY

But the Negroes fought back. Twice that night armed white persons invaded the Negro community. Both times the whites were peppered with buck and bird shot. Four police officers were slightly wounded. Wed 8-14-46

Highway patrolmen and state guardsmen, called out by Gov. Tom McCord, then went into action against the tiny Columbia Negro business community. The community was wrecked and looted. Negroes, large numbers of them veterans, were beaten and arrested.

On Feb. 28 two of the prisoners, William Gordon and James Johnson, were shot to death in jail.

Among the defendants is a clergyman, the Rev. Calvin Lockridge. Also among the accused are 75-year-old Julius Blair, patriarch of the Negro community, his son Sol Blair, local American Legion commander, and James Morton, undertaker and Red Cross leader.

In addition to the 25 there are five others facing trial on similar charges. Ten of the defendants are veterans.

Battle for Fair Tenn. Jury Uses Up Panel of 321

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Wed. 9-4-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 3.—Jury selection in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes entered its fourth week today with the original jury panel of 321 veniremen exhausted. Only five men were in the jury box.

Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered a new panel formed. Deputy Sheriffs prepared to go into the streets and in the surrounding rural areas to summon prospective jurors from business establishments and farms.

Meanwhile, attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, who are defending the Negroes, continued their dogged courtroom battle against attempts by state's attorneys to fill the jury box with men advocating a social system of white supremacy.

MUST PROVE INNOCENCE

Such a man was Frank Busbey, 47-year-old carpenter. District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus accepted Busbey as a juror when the latter testified he could give the defendants "justice." Questioned by Maurice Weaver for the defense Busbey revealed his son was a member of a state guard company sent to Columbia after a lynch mob roved the town on Feb. 25. The Negro defendants in this trial are charged with attempt to commit murder, using arms against that mob.

Busbey testified his son told him about the Columbia events. Busbey insisted, however, he had formed no opinions as to the guilt or innocence of the Negroes.

"But," asked Weaver, "would the defendants have to prove themselves innocent before you would turn them loose?"

"Yes," Busbey replied quickly.

Weaver demanded the court remove the venireman for cause. He cited the well known law that all men are assumed innocent until proved guilty.

Judge Ingram suggested Bumpus quiz the venireman further on the point raised by Weaver. Busbey contradicted his earlier testimony.

"The man is certainly qualified," barked the District Attorney. "The defense is wasting time."

SHOWS PREJUDICE

Judge Ingram announced Busbey was qualified. He told Weaver to "hurry along."

"Would you give more weight to a white man's testimony than a Negro?" was Weaver's next question. Wed. 9-4-46

"Well, I don't know about that." Busbey paused for a moment and added, "I'd give more weight to a white man." Weaver was again on his feet demanding removal of the venireman for prejudice.

Negroes Testify for Tennessee in Trial, Say They Saw 10 or 11 Defendants Armed

Tues. 9-24-46

The Times New York, N.Y. Special to The N

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 23—A Negro witness for the State testified today that he saw ten of the twenty-five Maury County Negroes on trial here, bearing arms "three minutes" before four policemen were wounded in a fusillade of gunfire in Mink Slide. During the disturbances in Columbia, Tenn., in February. 562

He was Early Shyer, 26-year-old veteran of World War II, who was the tenth witness called by the prosecutor, Paul F. Bumpus, since introduction of evidence began on Thursday.

His testimony followed that of his 23-year-old brother, Lee Andra Shyer, in which eleven of the defendants were identified as having been armed five minutes before the shooting. Tues. 9-24-46

Cross examination was more than twice as long as the prosecution's questioning of the Shyers, and the fact that the brothers were arrested at the scene of the shooting, along with "about a hundred other Negroes," gave the defense attorneys the cue to inquire into the treatment of the Negroes before they were released.

Both admitted they were beaten about the head with blackjacks by State highway patrolmen when they were in line at the jail awaiting registration, but they were "treated pretty nice" by Attorney General Bumpus.

The witnesses said they had not seen guns in the hands of Sol Blair, barber, or James Morton, undertaker, who are held as accessories before the fact in the shooting of the police officers.

The Shyer brothers told the court the circumstances of their arrest a few hours after the officers were shot when they went to Mink Slide, the Negro business district, after firing was heard in the vicinity.

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25 Negroes Fight for Life in Tenn. Courtroom

Daily Worker

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—W. E. Bryant, a Lawrence County farmer, hitches up his faded blue overalls as he takes the witness stand. He has sworn to tell the truth. And he appears to be trying to do just that.

of defense counsel Maurice Weaver, "I have read and heard right smart about the case."

Bryant, a white man, looks across the courtroom to the section reserved for the accused. There, seated in two rows, are 25 black men. Their serious eyes seem to be searching his innermost thoughts. He is embarrassed. He scans the black faces suspiciously.

He squirms uncomfortably. He turns appealingly to the smiling pink-faced man seated behind the judge's bench. New York. N.Y.

"I would be a little partial to white men," Bryant says weakly. "I don't think any evidence brought up could change my opinion."

Attorney Weaver moves the prospective juror be excused for cause. The District Attorney, Paul F. Bumpus, angrily insists the farmer is qualified to sit in judgment of the accused black men. Joe M. Ingram, the pink-faced judge, overrules Weaver. Questioning of the farmer and argument by counsel continues for an hour before the prejudiced venireman is finally removed for cause.

MULTIPLY this incident by more than 200. Visualize the whole against a background of vicious

white supremacy. And you will begin to understand why the battle for a jury here is moving into its third week.

The battle for the jury in the case of the 25 Columbia Negroes bids well to become the most significant legal clash in the long, dramatic history of Tennessee jurisprudence. Sun 9-1-46

This case, now unfolding in a violent atmosphere of jimcrow, has already hurled an uncompromising challenge at the whole Dixie system of second-class citizenship for Negroes.

Letters Threaten Maury Judge As Case Nears Jury

Nashville, Tenn., Banner
October [illegible], 1946

By DANNY
(BANNER S

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Oct. 4—Twelve Lawrence County farmers and tradesmen will begin deliberating the fate of 25 Maury County Negroes shortly after 3 o'clock this afternoon as Judge Joe M. Ingram completed his charge to the jury at 1:30 o'clock.

The case was not put into the hands of the jurors immediately since the defense attorneys asked permission to prepare special requests of charges to be read into the judge's instructions to the jury. A recess was declared for the lunch period and when court reconvenes at 3 o'clock, the additional charges will be handed the jury which will then go into its deliberation of the case.

The state announced that it was satisfied with the charge as it was presented by Judge Ingram, but defense attorneys stated that minor changes in the defense's theory "materially changed our position."

The Judge began reading his instructions to the jury at 11:25 o'clock immediately after Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus had concluded the State's closing arguments.

The judge impressed the jurors with the idea of giving a fair and impartial verdict. He went to great lengths to explain the different degrees of offenses contained in the charges under which the Negroes were indictd.

Referring to the second count under which 23 of the defendants are charged with attempted murder in the first degree, the Judge told the jury that they could find the Negroes guilty of (1) attempted murder in the first degree, (2) attempted murder in the second degree, (3) assault with intent to commit voluntary manslaughter or the misdemeanors of simple assault or assault and battery. The first three are classified as felonies.

For an hour and 15 minutes this morning the attorney general held the entire courtroom's rapt attention as he brought the State's closing arguments to an end. On more than one occasion the spectators made audible expressions of appreciation for the thoughts he expressed in his attack upon "carpetbaggers and other outside influences who would undermine our government."

The courtroom was filled to capacity with about 400 or 500 people, many of whom were Maury Countians, and all entrances were choked as others waited a recess at which time they could be admitted.

Hits Rabble-Rousers

"There would not have been nearly so much trouble if carpetbaggers would have stayed away and left us alone," Bumpus asserted. "The South has never been indifferent to the good opinion and respect of good people but we have demonstrated thoroughly that we are capable of conducting our own affairs," he continued.

"As soon as this trouble occurred in Columbia rabble-rousers gathered from far and near and had a field day. Vicious propaganda and malicious lies were poured out in a flood of sewerage that would nauseate anyone," he said.

Bumpus referred to "these agitators" as traitors and anarchists who would crucify America, "some to line their own pockets but others for purpose of furthering well-organized scheme to uproo our government."

The Attorney General's assertio contended, "There are people ove this county who should be mad to stay at home and to stop spev ing corruption over the land. T all this the South replies, 'Tal thy beaks out of our hearts ar take thy forms from our doors.'"

Bumpas heatedly stated, wouldn't give one good Negro f all the Dombrowski's, Eleanorsk and their ilk. This conntry n only needs a good bath, it neec a fumigation."

The Attorney General opened th last of the State's closing arguments late yesterday afternoon when he addressed the jury for 45 minutes and resumed this morning at 10 o'clock.

Preliminaries to the trial opened on May 28 in Columbia when the defense attorneys unsuccessfully attempted to have the indictment quashed through pleas in abatement. The trial was moved to Lawrence County on July 2 on defense motion for change of venue.

Selection of the jury was started on August 15 and introduction of proof on September 19.

The prosecution of the Negroes was described as an attempt to have the jury "make this a legal lynching," yesterday afternoon by Maurice Weaver, white Chattanooga attorney who is a representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and former CIO lawyer.

In the second of defense closing arguments to the jury Weaver spoke for two hours and a half, on the theme of "persecution of innocent people."

"The mob failed in Columbia on the night of February 25," the NAACP representative declared, "but now the State is asking this jury to take up the cudgel and carry out that lynching, by its presentation of warped and distorted evidence."

He appealed to the jury, "do not make this a legal lynching."

His argument was a sustained assault upon every phase of the State's case and he stated that the State's "preposterous" theory reminded him of "what we escaped." He continued, "We escaped the injustices and tyrannies of a super race which would have subjected all people to Fascism. The State's theory also reminds me of Lidice in Norway."

He shouted, "all proof introduced by the State indicates a gathering together of forces of tyranny against these defendants in an effort to prove to Negroes that the forces of law and order will grind Negroes under their heels. The only reason they want a conviction is to bend Negroes to their will. They want to prove that with your cooperation they can make an example of innocent men. They want to bring to this country a new philosophy and a new idea."

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Oct. 4—Certain types of publicity incident to the trial of 25 Maury County Negroes have brought from over the country a flood of "fan mail" to Judge Joe M. Ingram, which is not only highly uncomplimentary in most cases, but which in some instances carry dire threats.

The case has been reported to the tune of approximately 15,000 words daily, the equivalent of about 15 newspapers columns by more than a dozen news men representing news publications, many of which are located in the North and East.

The output of wordage has not only taxed local long distance facilities but has placed a strain on a special wire service installed for the event. A special news wire was run into the courthouse here and a telegrapher has been on duty from early morning until late at night since the introduction of proof began almost two weeks ago.

Following almost the same pattern of criticism, the letters in most instances condemn Judge Ingram and the state for the manner in which the trial has been conducted, and many insist upon the release of what they term "innocent men."

One of the most vicious letters received by the Judge this week came from Chicago and warns that "if things go wrong, sign your death warrant because I'm coming with an army hand grenade I would hate to drop in your little courtroom." Another letter contained numerous religious tracts with criticism of the Judge's conduct upon the bench, and warns of a day of judgment when the "Judge of the universe" will wield the gavel. It entreats Judge Ingram to "repent of unfairness and injustice."

All the letters, however, are not critical in nature, for some offer the writers appreciation for the "fair and impartial" trial provided the defendants who are accused of shooting four Columbia policeman from ambush on the night of February 25.

The Chicago letter was signed, "Mr. Bill Nusome" who purports to be a nephew of one of the defendants.

In a crimped illiterate hand, he rants.

"What is the idea? Are you afraid to give those boys justice and set in court and reject their evidence? You just like all Dixie pale face, think you own the whole world. I hate every pale face and you better watch your step because if those boys get a long time, you better sentence yourself because I be calling on you, big boy.

"One of those boys is my uncle, and I am waiting to see what is going to happen. Up here we treat pale Dixie faces like an Asia panther and you know what I mean. Our day is coming, and when it does I want to help kill all white men and be sweet to the women. They are OK. And when a man is defending himself you have the nerve to say he is guilty?

"Everyone of you dogs is just alike, and alike, you bark when you have the ups on every black person.

"If things go wrong sign your death warrant because I am coming with an army hand grenade I would hate to drop in your little courtroom."

The religiously inclined letter writer signed his name as Walter Branning, 128 Buffalo Street, Newport, Pa. A native of Florida, the grandson of a Confederate veteran who hastens to explain that he is "southern."

He writes "It is reported in the newspapers that you, sir, are refusing a fair trial to 25 Negroes and that you and the prosecution and the state troopers act like a lot of Nazis you are disgracing the white race, the State of Tennessee, the South and the United States of America by this biased, unfair trial.

"According to Vincent Sheean, former foreign correspondent, he went to places where certain witnesses claimed to have seen certain things and from the situation it was physically impossible to see such. He represents that your whole attitude unfair and one would thing such travesty on justice and curtailment of the defense's rights impossible in American courts. His direct quotations from the trial and statement of facts that much of the defense evidence is ruled out indicate that he is giving a true picture which he calls sad and a "national tragedy."

A person who signed his name as "Peter R. Piekarsko of Naples, Idaho, writes "A whole war was fought to eradicate racial and religious persecution as you are conducting."

"Actions such as yours will unite the Negroes and whites to overthrow such a repressive legal system such as the state of Tennessee has. Where is the equal rights of women? Why are they barred from jury service? Doesn't the State of Tennessee know there is a U. S. Constitution?"

"Hoping that you are removed as judge, I remain . . ."

Stating that the record of the long drawn out case speaks for itself, Judge Ingram declined to comment on the "fan mail" he has received.

Sheean mentioned in the Pennsylvanian's letter has for the past 10 days or two weeks been in Lawrenceburg writing a series of articles, chiefly observations in the courtroom, for the New York Herald-Tribune's syndicate service. A writer of wide note, he served as a correspondent during the Spanish revolution, and has written several books, among which are "Personal History," and "Not Peace But a Sword."

He figured in a recess period courtroom scene during the trial yesterday afternoon when he was upbraided by Tennessee's Commissioner of Public Safety Lynn Bomar for what the official termed "lies" written about him in one of Sheean's articles recently.

Confronting the New Yorker in front of the judge's unoccupied bench in the presence of several hundred spectators, Bomar presented the clipping of the article under dispute and asked, "Did you write this?"

Upon Sheean's admisston, Bomar shouted. "You are a lying Communistic yellow ——, now print that. That's the truth." Although both men were shaking with anger, no blows were passed.

Commissioner Bomar reports that he too, has received "hundreds" of letters similar in nature to those received by Judge Ingram. In answer to one such letter received yesterday morning, the commissioner replied:

"Neither I nor any member of my department holds any animosity toward any Negro man or woman, but we deeply resent outside agitators with Communistic tendencies who are attempting to stir up racial hatred. If such people will leave us alone, we can all live here in peace and happiness."

The letter was signed by a "W. H. Rogers" of New York who enclosed the clipping of the story written by Sheean which brought about yesterday afternoon's exchange of words between the commissioner and the writer.

In addition to representatives of both Nashville newspapers, other reporters covering the trial include, Beryl Sellers of the Associated Press in Chattanooga, Henry Moscow of the New York Post, Bob Romie of the Chicago Tribune, Harry Raymond of the New York Daily Worker, Bob Minor of The Daily Worker, Albert Hinton, Negro writer for the Norfolk (Virginia) Journal and Guide, Negro newspaper; Enoch Waters of the Chicago Defender, Negro Newspaper; Robert Ratcliffe of the Pittsburgh Courier, Negro newspaper, and Tubbs of the Afro-American, Baltimore Negro publication.

Columbia Trial Yields No "Unbiased" Jurors

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.
Wed. 8-28-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Henn. — As the trial of 25 Columbia Tennessee Negroes charged with attempted murder moves into its second week in Negro-hating Lawrenceburg County, it is becoming increasingly evident that it will be impossible to pick a non-prejudiced jury. After three days of questioning, only two jurors have been accepted out of 46, all of whom admitted, in one bigoted statement or another, that they could not give a Negro a fair trial.

One juror, W. E. Staggs, a 64-year-old white farmer, told the court he would'nt give the same credit to testimony offered by a Negro as he would to that of a white man. He told Maurice Weaver, NAACP attorney for the defense, that he believed in separate types of justice for Negroes and whites and added that he thought some of the principles of the Ku Klux Klan were "very good." After unsuccessfully moving for Staggs' rejection for cause, lawyers for the defense surprised the court by accepting this biased man as the first juror. Possibly Staggs' presence on the jury can serve later, in the event of any or all the defendants' conviction, as a major reversible error and cause for a retrial.

It is also clear that the state does not intend to permit a Negro to serve on the jury. Two have been questioned—the first in the county in 50 years—but both were excused. One, who knew a defendant, had a fixed opinion and didnot want to serve. The other was released because he was ill.

It is reported that there is a chance that the entire panel of 312 talesmen will be exhausted before the jury is complete.

Tennessee Commissioner Claims Gun Cache Found In Columbia

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

Fri. 9-27-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn—(SNS) — According to the testimony of Lynn Bomar, Tennessee Safety Commissioner, law enforcement officers found "about 14 or 16 guns and ammunition all over the place" in the home of James Morton, a defendant in the trial of 25 Negroes here on charges growing out of the Columbia, Tenn., racial disturbances early this year

Bomar conjectured that "there's no doubt" that an officer could be distinguished day or night, from a civilian when entering the Mink Slide business district where four city policemen were wounded during disorders Defense Counsel has sought to prove that persons in the area thought "a white mob" was entering the quarter and that they did not know the four membres of the Columbia Police Force

Defense Attorney Leon Ransom objected to questioning of Bomar about anything fond in Morton's house on the morning following the shootings, but the judge, asi many other instances, overruled. Ransom declared the commissioner "violated constitutional rights of Morgon and his guests when he entered the house without a search warrant." Bomar said he didn't think about search warrants in the "emergency"

Racial-Trial Site Is Changed; Defense Asks Then Opposes It

Columbia, Tenn., July 2 (AP)—Twenty-five Negro defendants facing charges growing out of racial disorders four months ago won a change of venue today, but lawyers representing them put in an objection to a plan to try the 25 in neighboring Lawrence County.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored people sought unsuccessfully to withdraw its motion for a change of venue after Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram had granted it and then announced the trials would be held at Lawrencebufg August 6.

In its original motion the N.A.A.C.P. had contended a fair trial could not be conducted at Columbia, seat of Maury County. When Lawrence County was designated, however, counsel asked that the trials be reset at Nashville. This motion was denied.

"It is a part of the defendants' feelings that if any race hatred and prejudice exist in Maury County, it is doubly so in Lawrence County," Maurice Weaver, Chattanooga, a defense lawyer, said. "There is more bigotry and racial prejudice in Lawrence County than there is in Maury."

Saw Armed Mob Before Tennessee Riot 76-Year-Old Witness Tells Trial Jury

The Call, Kansas City, Mo. Fri. 10-4-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—(NNPA— Julius Blair, 76-year-old political leader and one of 25 men charged with taking part in a race riot in Columbia, Tenn., February 25, testified Friday that he had seen an armed white mob on the public square prior to the disturbance.

Charged with being an accessory to the shooting of Policeman Will Wilsford, Blair said he and other persons decided February 25 to escort James Stephenson, a war veteran, out of town. Stephenson with his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson, had been arrested after an altercation with a white radio repairman and released on bail on a charge of attacking the white man.

Saw 50 Guns

"The last time I went to the Square there was a big crowd of white people and I'd say between 25 and 50 guns," Blair told the jury.

Blair, the first defense witness, said that long before Wilsford Lynn Bomar, State Patrol Commissioner and former All-American end on the Vanderbilt football team. He said he and his men surrounded the Mink Slide area on the night of February 25 when four policemen were shot there, and rounded up more than 100 colored persons the next morning.

Under cross-examination, he admitted that he and his men entered the house of James Morton, one of the defendants, without a search warrant, and found eleven colored persons and some fifteen shotguns, pistols and rifles and a quantity of ammunition. The Call

Judge Ingram instructed the jury to forget parts of this testimony because Bomar's entrance without a warrant was "unlawful." At the same time, the judge permitted testimony to stand that the Bomar raiding party found firearms concealed in the house.

Loses His Temper

Under cross-examination by Mr Weaver, Bomar lost his temper on the witness stand. In reply to a query as to whether he had anything against any of the defendants, he snapped: "I have some very good friends among the colored race, and I have more respect for any member of the colored race than I have for you. You went to Columbia and agitated this thing." Kansas City, Mo.

Mr. Looby protested to the court. Judge Ingram refused to strike Bomar's outburst from the record, but did warn both sides to refrain from personalities.

Bomar admitted that he kicked one colored man while arresting him and held another on the floor by keeping one foot on the prisoner's neck. Fri. 10-4-46

His admission came when **Weaver** asked: "Were any witnesses in this case intimidated? Did you see patrolmen strike Negroes with blackjacks on their way to jail?"

Admits Kicking Witness

Bomar replied: "Witnesses were foot on the neck of the other."

In amplifying this he said the **one he** "kicked" or, as he amended it, "booted in the hip with my knee," was slow in putting his asked for a recess until Saturday, but Judge Ingram refused, saying that night sessions would be held until further notice to speed proceedings. (NAACP lawyers must travel 150 miles a day to Nashville to eat and sleep.)

The State closed its case with testimony and exhibits intended to prove that the four policemen who were shot February 25 when they entered Mink Slide were plainly visible. The defense contends that colored people in the area were alarmed over "racial feelings" and mistook the officers for a mob.

Presentation of the State's case required a week, but six weeks were needed to select the all-white jury hearing the evidence.

Weaver sought to show in court last Thursday that State police helped to destroy property in the Mink Slide area when the disorders broke out.

The chief witness for the State at last Thursday's session was and three other policemen were shot in Mink Slide that night he had told officers "the Stephenson boy has been taken out of town and there's no use to have trouble."

Blair said he made bond for Mrs. Stephenson and her son, James, because "I heard a mob was growing and I knew the jail was no safe place for anybody."

He said that about 30 minutes before the four policemen were wounded in Mink Slide he closed his poolroom and soda fountain in the area and went home.

"I didn't know about anything that happened until the next morning," he testified. "I never even talked of doing harm to any one—white or colored."

Blair said he was arrested after the disorder and was not permitted to see any outsiders until late the following day.

Couldn't Be Implicated

Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram earlier overruled a defense motion for a directed verdict of acquittal for the defendants.

"Not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could the defendants be implicated," Attorney Z. Alexander Looby, of Nashville, declared as he presented the motion in the jury's absence.

"The prosecution has only presented evidence that the defendants were seen in Mink Slide prior to the wounding of four police officers," Mr. Looby argued. "There hasn't been a single witness to say any of the defendants had a weapon at the time of the shooting."

Looby pointed out that "a great many of these defendants have not even been mentioned by (State) witnesses."

On application by Defense Attorney Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga, Judge Ingram recessed court from midmorning until the afternoon to give the defense additional time to prepare its case. The State rested at 10:10 o'clock last Thursday night.

Hold Night Court

Leon A. Ransom, of Washington, D. C., chief defense counsel. hands up" and very sullen about it."

"The other one," Bomar said, "was in jail when the two Negroes were killed and a deputy sheriff wounded after one of the Negroes grabbed a rifle and started shooting. When I came into the room one of my men said he had tried to grab his pistol from his holster. So I grabbed him by the coat, another policeman threw him to the floor, and I put my foot on his neck and told him if he tried to get up I would kill him."

Bomar denied on earlier cross-examination that his men were responsible for the looting and vandalism during or after a dawn raid in Mink Slide the morning after the shooting of the four city policemen.

Court Denies Acquittal Plea In Columbia Riot Trial

P.M. New York, N.Y.

Sun. 9-29-46

By Associated Press

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 28.—Circuit Court Judge Joe Ingram yesterday overruled a defense motion for a directed verdict of acquittal for 25 Negroes on trial on charges arising from the February racial disorders at Columbia.

"Not by the wildest stretch of the imagination could the defendants be implicated," Attorney Z. Alexander Looby declared as he presented the motion.

"The prosecution has only presented evidence that the defendants were seen in Mink Slide prior to the wounding of four police officers," Looby argued. "There hasn't been a single witness to say any of the defendants had a weapon at the time of the shooting."

Earlier, a 76-year-old political leader, one of the defendants, testified he had seen an armed white crowd on the public square prior to the disturbance.

Julius Blair, charged with being an accessory to the shooting of Patrolman Will Wilsford, said he and other Negro leaders decided Feb. 25 to escort James Stephenson, a Negro, out of town. Stephenson had been jailed and then released on a charge of attacking a white man.

56a 1946 Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

The Ku Klux Klan Gets a Voice In an American Courtroom

The Worker New York, N.Y.

Sun. 9-15-46

56a

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—J. W. Kilgo, landowner and father of former Republican candidate for Governor of Tennessee John Kilgo, is on the witness stand in Lawrence County Courthouse. "Where I came from in Alabama," he testifies, "I didn't see many colored people. They were like circus animals to me—something like elephants. I was scared of them."

Judge Joe M. Ingram, smiling broadly, tells Kilgo he is under oath and his testimony will decide if he is qualified to sit as a juror in the case of the "State vs. Sol Blair et al."

Kilgo seems to understand. He grins, turns his head slowly, looks down sheepishly at 25 Negroes seated in two rows near the courtroom windows. He surveys them curiously, cynically.

Defense Attorney Maurice Weaver, barred by the Court from asking prospective jurors about race prejudice, ventures a question on Kilgo's early life in Alabama.

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TWO HUNDRED eager spectators, held tense by the legal spectacle, strain for the answer.

Kilgo twitches nervously. He pulls himself together like a schoolboy making his first public recitation. In a high piping voice he declares:

"We had a sign there that said: 'Nigger, read and run: If you can't read, run anyhow.'"

There is laughter in the spectators' section. Kilgo's grin broadens. But the 25 dark-skinned men in two rows near the windows do not laugh. They face 20-year prison terms for fighting the evil men who inspire such signs.

"Did you approve of the sentiment of the sign?" Attorney Weaver ventures.

"Yes," replies Kilgo.

"Do you still support it?" The defense lawyer asks.

"Yes, I do," Kilgo splutters with a half-hearted air of triumph.

Z. Alexander Looby, Tennessee's leading Negro lawyer is on his feet. Beside him stands Dr. Leon A. Ransom, noted Negro counselor and educator. They join Weaver, lone white attorney for the defense, demanding Kilgo be disqualified for jury service. The court takes over the examination.

★

"YOU HAVE NO prejudice against members of the colored race?" Judge Ingram says. He beams down on the venireman. "You have no prejudice against these 25 defendants?" He puts the word "no" right into Kilgo's mouth.

"No," replies Kilgo. There is a little more firmness in his voice. He's got the Judge on his side.

"You would try the case purely on the evidence?" The judge pleads, "and under the rules given you by this court?"

"I would," Kilgo obediently and without hesitation.

Judge Ingram is extremely irritated at defense protests. "Motion overruled," he barks, his pink face turning almost crimson. "The court considers the veniremen qualified."

"Objection," snaps Dr. Ransom in a sharp clear voice, the syllables of the word crackling like a furiously burning ember.

"Objection overruled," drones the judge.

Kilgo is not on the jury. He is not one of the 12 men deciding the fate of Columbia Negroes. Kilgo was removed by a peremptory challenge. But there were only 200 peremptory challenges. That would be enough to protect the defense in some courts. It is not enough where Judge Ingram makes the rules.

For in the jury box in Lawrence County Court sits the spiritual brother of Kilgo. He is W. E. Staggs He testified: "I don't believe in the same justice for Negroes as for whites. . . . I would believe a white witness before a Negro. . . ." And in reply to the question: "Do you believe in the principle of the Ku Klux Klan?" He said: "Some of the things are very good."

★

HOW MANY MORE Klan-minded men are sitting on the Columbia trial jury today, I do not know. Maybe there are one of two lone voices there to speak out for justice and against "white supremacy."

But that will not be known until all the evidence is in and the verdict announced. The trial record will show, however, that Judge Ingram and District Attorney Paul Bumpus tried hard to put openly avowed Klansmen and sympathizers on the jury. Sun. 9-15-46

Some like T. A. Farrell, self-admitted former Klan member, were kept off by peremptory defense challenges. Farrell was "qualified," the Judge declared. And Bumpus, looking up at the Judge with an air of feeling hurt by a defense objection, said: "Because he was once a member of the Ku Klux Klan it doesn't follow he couldn't make a good juror."

The opinion of Farrell and Juror Staggs are known. But how many secret klansmen slipped through after Judge Ingram barred defense lawyers from probing the conscience of veniremen on matters of race prejudices and law? That is the big question in the minds of the 25 accused Negroes. Will the conscience of America permit the Ku Klux Klan to ride openly in a Tennessee courtroom? That is the question you must answer.

Tenn. Cop 'Saw No Lynch Mob'

Daily Worker

New York, N.Y.

Sat. 9-21-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 20.—**A shifty-eyed 27-year-old policeman sat on the witness chair for more than two hours today insisting he did not see what nearly everyone else in his home town, Columbia, knew happened the afternoon and night of Feb. 25.**

He was one of six policemen on duty on the public square. He prowled the town in a police car. But, according to his halting testimony, he was not aware an armed lynch mob had formed on the square. Nor would he admit knowledge of the mob's attempt to storm the jail to take out James Stephenson, Negro Navy veteran, and the latter's mother.

He is patrolman Bernard O. Stoefel, third state witness in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes. He eagerly told how he stopped a couple of buck shot pellets when he and three other policemen entered the darkened Negro business district followed by a crowd.

The crowd, photographed during the "trouble" brandishing firearms, was declared unarmed and totaling around 50 by the police witness.

"They were shouting and hollering," he testified under cross examination by defense lawyer Dr. Leon A. Ransom, "I don't know what they were hollering," he added. "I heard nothing unusual."

Stoefel testified he was called to City Hall where Mayor Denham, City Manager Swann and the commissioners were meeting. He said he got no information there of any lynch mobs or attempted jail storming. He explained he was advised by a city official, whose name he could not remember, that Negroes were gathering arms in Macedonia, a Negro residential section.

He said he drove through Macedonia with two other policemen and failed to see any armed Negroes. Then, Stoefel declared, he drove with other policemen to the Negro business district where he observed 76-year-old Julius Blair, his son Sol and undertaker James Morton, defendants, on the street with a group of "more than 50 armed Negroes.

Neither of the three were armed, the policeman said. He quoted Morton as saying: "The boy and his mother are down here. (The Stephensons had been taken out of jail on bail by the Blairs). They didn't do anything. We're going to protect them. Tell the white people not to come down here."

"I heard the Blairs, Julius and Sol, tell the other policemen, 'Tell the white people don't come down here. We're ready for them.'"

"How were the defendants talking when you first went down to the Negro district?" Dr. Ransom asked the witness.

"In a way no n - - - - r should talk to a white man," Stoefel replied.

He testified the officers told the Negroes not to be alarmed and the policemen had come to protect the Negroes. Sat. 9-21-46

"Protect them from what?" asked Ransom.

"I don't know," the witness said.

Later Stoefel described the mob that followed him and three other cops on the second visit as a "crowd of boys." He later admitted some of the "boys" were bigger than some of the policemen.

Stoefel said he was met by gunfire on the darkened street. He testified he ran back up the street and got into the parked car of City Manager Swann. He was quizzed by Ransom on this.

Q. How did the City Manager happen to be there?

A. He was driving by.

Q. Where was the City Manager?

A. He was parked across the street. Daily Worker

Q. First you said he was riding by?

A. Well, he stopped.

Q. You, a police officer, don't know the difference between stopping and parking? New York, N.Y.

A. Yes.

Earlier Z. A. Looby, chief defense counsel, presented a long argument, with the jury excluded from the room, stating the defense will claim the lynching in Columbia in 1933 of Cordie Cheek, 14-year-old Negro, and the lynching of another Negro, Henry Choate, in 1927, is fresh in the minds of the 25 defendants. Looby said he would show Columbia public officials were involved in these lynchings. Sat. 9-21-46

Judge Ingram ruled he would not permit the jury to hear evidence of prior mob violence against Columbia Negroes.

Johnson City, Tenn. Chronicle
Sept. 17, 1946

Stage Almost Set For Negro Riot Trial

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 17. (AP)—With a jury selected after a month's screening of more than 500 veniremen, circuit court today set out to choose an alternate juror as standby in the trial of 25 Columbia Negroes on charges of participating in last February's racial disturbance.

Court attaches predicted at least two days would be needed for the final selection.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is conducting the defense.

The trial was brought here on defense motion for a change of venue from Columbia, scene of the racial disturbances in the Mink Slide area during which two Negroes were killed and more than a dozen officers of the law and citizens wounded.

Both defense counsel and Lawrenceburg officials resisted the shift.

During the quest for jurymen, five veniremen were jailed and fined for contempt of court, and the court itself excused most of the prospects—about half of them for prejudice.

In an attempt to avoid further delay when the trial begins, the court last week had all jurors examined by the county health officer to determine their fitness to stand a long trial.

The defendants were indicted by the grand jury of neighboring Maury county on charges ranging from assault with intent to commit murder to accessory before and after the fact.

Several other Columbia Negroes face trial on similar charges in Maury county.

Nashville, Tenn., Banner
Sept. 13, 1946

Court Recesses As Jurors Get Physical Tests

By DANNY BINGHAM
(BANNER Staff Writer)

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 13—Questioning of veniremen was delayed this morning until the 10 members of the jury already selected for the trial of 25 Maury County Negroes could be given a physical examination in compliance with the court's ruling of yesterday afternoon.

Judge Joe M. Ingram ordered a recess until 1 o'clock this afternoon soon after the last group of the third panel of prospective juriors had answered the roll call. He took this action when it was learned that the Lawrence County Health Officer had not been able to conduct the examinations last night as had been previously planned by the court.

A night session seemed imminent in view of Judge Ingram's statement that today's session would not be adjourned until the nineteen veniremen answering the morning roll call and the 30 scheduled for this afternoon are questioned.

The judge also stated that at the conclusion of today's session the court would order the fourth panel of prospective jurors called. Today's quota depletes the third group of 169 summoned earlier in the week.

If the check-up reveals any member of the panel has physical weakness which might result in his being incapacitated during the trial that man will be excused and a replacement chosen. The court can excuse any member of the panel at its discretion until the time the jury is sworn in as a panel.

The measure was ordered at the suggestion of Special Asst. Dist. Atty. Gen. Hugh Todd Shelton, Sr., of Columbia, with the concurrence of defense attorneys.

At the conclusion of yesterday's session, Shelton stated that "since it appears the court might complete the selection of the jury within the next day or two," the State felt it advisable to determine the physical capabilities of the jurors in order to avoid a delay in the trial on account of the illness of jurors.

The prolonged illness of more than one member of the trial panel would result in a mistrial since only one alternate is permitted under the statues, it has been pointed out.

Shelton added that the suggestion was made at that time solely out of fairness to the defense attorneys who still hold peremptory challenges which they could use in the selection of replacements is if such is necessary.

The health officers report is expected to be received by the court sometime today. Only 24 prospects were examined for jury duty yesterday, with none accepted.

Twelve were excused by the defense attorneys who are representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and one by Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus for the state on peremptory challenge.

The court excused 11 because of illness or pre-formed opinions as to the guilt or innocence of the 25 defendants who are charged with being accessories before the fact and attempted murder in the first degree during the Columbia disturbances of last February.

The defense has used 164 of its original 200 challenges, and the state 29 of its 100. The court has excused a total of 346 of the 550 examined.

COLUMBIA RIOT CASE GETS FIRST JUROR

Tues 8-20-46

Times
New York N.Y.

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 19—The first juror for the trial of twenty-five Negroes charged with attempted murder in the Columbia, Tenn., racial disorders of last February was accepted today as the selection of the twelve-man trial panel entered the second week.

Defense attorneys, composed of representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, approved W. E. Staggs, Lawrence County farmer, after he had declared he "believes in justice for black and white," in about forty minutes of questioning. He had been accepted by District Attorney General Paul Bumpus after brief questioning.

Staggs was the fourth prospective juror examined today, and twenty-sixth since the selection of the jury began last Thursday.

One of today's quota, a farmer, was fined $25 by the court for contempt when he failed to answer the roll call. Tues 8-20-46

Unless the court changes its customs here, Staggs faced the prospect of spending his nights for the next several weeks in jail under guard. Court regulations provide that jurors are to be given quarters in the Lawrence County jail under the eye of two guards assigned by the court.

Tenn. Judge Clamps Gag on Defense

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Thurs. 8-29-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 28.—Judge Joe M. Ingram, in an extraordinary decision ruled today that hereafter all questions to prospective jurors in the trial of the Columbia Negroes probing the veniremen's possible race prejudice shall be asked by the court.

The decision, circumscribing examination of venfremen by counsel on the major issues of the trial, was characterized by attorneys of the National Assn. for Advancement of Colored People, defense lawyers, as unprecedented in Lawrence County and grossly unfair to the 25 Negroes' defense.

Judge Ingram's ruling came after District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus objected to Dr. Leon A. Ransom, defense counsel, asking a prospective juror if he would give similar credit to testimony of white and Negro witnesses.

He said the defense was using more time than necessary and was "going too far afield." He called on the court to limit all questions on "race" to lists submitted in advance, and he demanded questions be asked by the court exclusively.

The judge invoked the ruling over bitter objections of Chief Counsel Z. A. Looby, Ranson and Attorney Maurice Weaver. Ingram ordered the lawyers to have the race questions submitted for the afternoon court session. Thurs. 8-29-46

Defense attorneys made it clear by their vigorous objections that it would be impossible under the ruling, whereby they are forbidden to develop a line of questioning to probe various attitudes of veniremen to fully ascertain the prospective juror's opinions on legal rights of Negroes.

The clash over the "race" questions developed when Dr. Ransom was questioning D. D. McMasters, local farmer and prospective juror. McMasters, quizzed previously by the state, declared he had no prejudice against Negroes. The state accepted McMasters as a juror. But Dr. Ransom probed deeper and Bumpus protested that the venireman declared he had no prejudice. "That's what we are here to find out," declared Dr. Ransom, who added he "resented" the District Attorney's statement.

"You can resent any way you want," retorted the State's Attorne, in a hostile mood, "and I'll be here as long as you, and probably later."

McMasters blurted out: "I'd be partial to a white man. I'd believe a white man more than I'd believe a Negro."

The court was forced to remove McMasters for cause.

The 25 Negroes on trial are charged with attempt to commit murder, growing out of the Columbia Negro community's armed resistance to a lynch mob Feb. 25.

Trial Scene Like Battle Front—Ollie

The Afro-American
Baltimore, Md.
Sat. 6-29-46

By OLLIE STEWART
AFRO Staff Correspondent

COLUMBIA, Tenn. — Going from Nashville to the trial in Columbia is like going "up to the front" in the war.

On second thought, the two things are not so much alike. During the war we did have a chance in a foxhole when things got rough—but I'm not so sure about this place.

Zero hour came for me when I walked into Looby's office in the Masonic building in Nashville and found Thurgood Marshall and Charles J. Reed, law clerk in Looby's office, mopping away the sweat at nine-thirty in the morning. 6-29-46

Reed is a former chief steward in the Navy, a law graduate from Kent College of Law and former Fisk and Tennessee State man. Tall, husky and smiling, Reed said he was anxious to leave so that we could cover the 45 miles to Columbia without driving 75 miles per hour as on the previous day.

Marshall Uneasy

Thurgood, who had sweated from a fever of more than 100 degrees the previous night, said he hoped Weaver, the white lawyer, wouldn't take his wife along that day. "We've got enough grief as it is," he said.

Finally, the suave Z. Alexander Looby walked in and we went down to get into his fine Oldsmobile, parked in the alley. His stenographer, a lovely and efficient child, watched us leave with eyes that were pitying. "I get a feeling every time that car leaves the alley," she said. "I keep that feeling until I see it back in the alley." The Afro-American

Personally, I think she would have been more tactful if she had said something about the weather—since this was my first trip. Baltimore, Md.

Anyway, we picked up the white, blue-eyed Chattanooga lawyer at his hotel and after filling up with gas, headed for Maury County. Sat. 6-29-46

Suddenly, I noticed the grim silence that settled over Looby, Thurgood, Weaver, Reed and me. My mouth was too dry and there was something I never quite completely swallowed. Somebody suggested that I might as well have my Christmas gifts sent to Nashville — because the trial would probably last until December.

Weaver Mentions Rope

Weaver, the white lawyer said with a smile: "If the hot weather makes one of these Maury County boys lose his head, you won't need to worry about Christmas presents. You'll get a nice tight rope—long before Christmas."

Sure, I know he was kidding, but all of a sudden I wished for the comparative safety of a buzz-borb attack in London.

Thurgood said: "It's the way they stare at you. I'd feel a lot better if they cursed me out to my face. These mean looks give me a mighty funny feeling."

When we crossed Duck river, Weaver said, almost musingly, "This is where our bodies are supposed to float by."

We reached the courthouse with two minutes to go. Thurgood, Weaver and Looby got out at the door; Reed and I went a few blocks over a hill to the colored section, where we parked the car. Coming back to the courthouse on foot, I had to check an impulse to run into the building. Silent, Columbia residents just stared—and I knew what Thurgood meant.

Colored in Balcony

The courtroom was full, with about thirty colored persons in the balcony. Only the judge and lawyers wore coats and ties. Somebody in court (a lot of somebodies) hadn't bathed lately and not everybody was on speaking terms with a razor.

Reed and I sat near the defense table, as Thurgood and Weaver and Looby made liars out of practically all the State's witnesses. Finally, when they would become defiant, counsel would ease up on them or excuse them with a curt, "That's all."

Marshall is deadly on cross examination, but no lawyer could win this case in Maury County.

The prosecutor turned toward the press bench, where local papers had their representatives, when he drove home a telling point. After each session, he had a press conference. Frequently, there was a recess, and everybody, from the judge on down, lit a cigarette or a pipe.

Plenty of Food

Every day the lawyers for the defense eat with a different tofamily—and each family tries to out-do the other. I haven't seen so much food in ages! Thurgood and Weaver are just as good at the table as they are in the courtroom. What appetites!

Back to court after lunch (I mean banquet) it's so easy to nod. Hot weather, a full stomach and oratory—the perfect recipe for a nap.

Since I am the Pollyanna type I must find some good in covering the Columbia trial. I remember a thrilling moment, a beautiful moment, a moment of ecstacy—and it came to me in Columbia.

It was my first day and the day's session was over and we were all piling into the car and somebody said in a tight voice: "Shut the damn door and let's get back to Nashville before it gets dark.

That was one of the happiest moments of my life.

Columbia Trial Nears As Court Gags Defense

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.
Thurs. 9-12-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 11.—Jury selection in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes moved swiftly toward conclusion today as Judge Joe M. Ingram clamped tighter arbitrary restrictions on rights of the defense to examine veniremen.

The 10th juror, chosen after nearly five weeks of hard-fought battle by Attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People for a fair and impartial trial, entered the box today. He is Frank Kersteins, local carpenter and member of a small Roman Catholic parish.

The defense, forced to use batches of its peremptory challenges in an effort to keep admitted Ku Klux Klan members and sympathizers off the jury, is expected to have exhausted its 200 peremptorys tomorrow or early Friday. The case is expected to reach the trial stage this week.

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus it was learned, is preparing to call the state witnesses. He will ask for conviction of the Negro defendants on attempt to murder charges, carrying a 20 year prison term. The Negroes were indicted following violence outbursts against the Columbia Negro community.

Judge Ingram ruled today against a motion by Dr. Leon A. Ranson, defense attorney to quash the present jury panel. Ransom pointed out the panel was illegal inasmuch as members of the panel had received notice to appear in court for service three days before the panel was formed.

Ransom offered a postmarked jury notice as evidence but Judge Ingram ruled all arguments stricken from the record. The tell-tale jury notice was withdrawn as an exhibit.

CORRECTION

In the Daily Worker of Sept. 9 a news story from Lawrenceburg, Tenn., appeared with the headline: **KLANSMAN PICKED ON TENNESSEE JURY.** This was an error. As the fifth paragraph of the story points out, Hammet, the venireman discussed, was qualified by Judge Ingram but was later removed by peremptory challenge by the defense attorneys. The Daily Worker regrets this error.

56a 1946.

Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

An Ominous Shift in Tennessee Trial

Change of Venue to Lawrenceburg Exposes Aim in Top Circles

By Harry Raymond

The Worker New York, N.Y. Sun 7-7-46

56a

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—The decision of Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram last Tuesday to try the case of the 25 Columbia Negroes in Lawrence County, 34 miles south of here, left no doubt in the minds of fair-minded citizens that a conspiracy exists in top official circles to railroad the defendants, and five more indicted Negroes, to long terms in the Tennesee State prison.

Before court opened last Monday to hear change of venue pleas by attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, reports were widely circulating throughout the town that Judge Ingram and District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus were "going to take care of those N------." Sun. 7-7-46

"It's all in the bag," a white Columbia resident told me. "Sol Blair (the leading defendant) and the rest of those Mink Sliders are going to get a change of venue they're not looking for. I'll lay odds the case will go to Lawrenceburg. That's one place the colored folks keep in their place."

Meade Johnson, one of the defendants and father of William Johnson, one of two Negroes youths slain by Highway Patrolmen in jail, heard similar reports.

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DECISION of the Court to send the trial to Lawrence County overruled two days of strong argument by Z. Alexander Looby, Dr. A. L. Ransom and Maurice Weaver, defense attorneys.

Assistant State's Attorney Hugh Shelton admitted the State could not refute defense evidence. This evidence, in affidavit form, showed the lynch spirit so great in Columbia against Negroes that it would be impossible to give the defendants a fair and impartial trial here.

The State then produced nine affidavits from residents of Lawrence County alleging no prejudice against Negroes existed there.

A quick survey of the situation by the defense revealed Jimcrow customs to be even more widespread and deep-rooted in Lawrence County than in Maury County, where Columbia is the county seat.

Julius Blair, 75-year-old leader of the Columbia Negro community and a defendant, said that Negroes are barred by whites from residence in most of Lawrence County. He said he knows of only 10 Negro families living in the urban section of the county.

All of the defendants, charged with attempt to commit murder for militantly fighting a lynch mob Feb. 25, have ex[illegible]sed vigorous opposition to holding the trial in Lawrenceburg.

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REVELATIONS of the violent anti-Negro spirit in Lawrenceburg caused defense attorneys to act to withdraw the change of venue plea and take chances on trying the case amid the excitement and threatened violence of Columbia. Sun. 7-7-46

"To go to Lawrenceburg," declared Attorney Looby, "would be worse than jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

The defense recommendation that the case be tried in Williamson County, 34 miles north of here, or Davidson County, 44 miles away, was brushed aside by Judge Ingram. Ingram limited discussion concerning other counties, and based his decision solely on the State motion.

Throughout five weeks of testimony and argument to throw out the indictment, Judge Ingram ruled nearly 100 percent in favor of the State. Evidence that Negroes have been systematically barred from jury service in Maury County for 50 years failed to move the Judge. He ruled the all-white grand jury indictments were legal.

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THE LAWRENCEBURG TRIAL DATE was set at Aug. 6, but there is yet no indication when the trial will begin. The defense has not revealed what steps it will take to get the venue changed again to a less hostile area.

Meanwhile, the wheels of Jimcrow justice continue to grind in Maury County Courthouse.

The cases of William Pillow Lloyd Kennedy, Negroes charged with firing on the lynch mob and local police the night of Feb. 25, came up for hearing July 5. Sun. 7-7-46

NAACP attorneys have filed pleas of abatement in behalf of these defendants, charged on separate indictments with assault with attempt to commit murder in the first degree. Again, as in the case of the 25, defense lawyers will put into the record evidence of the Jimcrow jury system.

The case of John Blackwell, nearly killed by police beatings, is scheduled to follow that of Pillow and Kennedy. Blackwell is charged with assault with attempt to commit murder in the first degree.

Looby said he will also enter abatement pleas in the cases of Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and her Navy veteran son, indicted on assault charges. The Columbia lynch mob was formed after young Stephenson knocked down Will Fleming, a white man, when the latter hit and kicked his mother.

Judge Muzzles Tenn. Defense

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Thurs. 9-5-46

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By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 4.—Judge Joe M. Ingram today angrily denied defense attorneys in the trial of the Columbia Negroes the right to quiz prospective jurors on matters of race prejudice or law.

As a result of the unprecedented ruling, Luther Mink, P. E. Myrick and Herbert Ekton were declared by the court to be qualified jurors despite their sworn statements approving principles of the Ku Klux Klan and second class citizenship for Negroes.

The only right under the ruling remaining for attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People in the examination of veniremen is that of peremptory challenge. They have been barred from exerting the usual legal challenge of a venireman for cause.

The high-handed action of the court came after more than three weeks of examination of prospective jurors. Out of a panel of 312 veniremen only five found their way into the jury box.

ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE

Prominent local observers, without expressing sympathy with the 25 Negro defendants, are quite firm in stating it will be almost impossible under the new arbitrary procedure to get a fair and impartial jury for the case.

Judge Ingram not only struck a deep blow at the rights of the Columbia Negroes charged with attempt to murder white policemen, but vented his ire on prospective jurors and lawyers for the defense alike.

He ordered C. W. Cox, a prospective juror to jail for 10 days with a fine of $50 because he would not try to take the rules from the judge. Cox was the fourth venireman jailed by Judge Ingram for contempt. Brack Hudson, third man jailed, was released after a delegation of leading citizens protested the court's action.

He threatened to jail defense counsel Maurice Weaver, for insisting on quizzing prospective jurors on their opinions of the Ku Klux Klan.

Ten prospective jurors ordered to appear in court this morning were fined $25 each for failure to answer their names for examination.

SPEED-UP SYSTEM

Under the new speed-up system of examination, the Judge questions the veniremen in groups of ten or more, explaining a defendant is considered innocent until proved guilty and that **"under the law"** Negroes and whites have the same rights. When the veniremen nod their heads in the affirmative the Judge declares them qualified.

Defense counsel Z. A. Looby challenged the legality of Ingram's method of qualifying the veniremen en masse. The defense objected to being denied the right to ask questions on race prejudice, the central question of the trial.

Looby objected to the court's arbitrary qualification of obviously prejudiced veniremen. All objections were overruled with rapid bangs of the gavel.

Attorney Weaver, barred from asking questions on race, quizzed venireman Myrick about the Ku Klux Klan. Myrick stated he approved **"some things the Klan stands for."**

BULLETIN

As part of a new American Crusade Against Lynching, Paul Robeson, chairman, announced yesterday that a Pilgrimage to Washington on Sept. 23 is now being organized.

Among the sponsors of this fight to arrest the lynchers and oust Bilbo from the U.S. Senate are Joe Louis, Albert Einstein, Joseph Curran, Bartley Crum, Lena Horne, Canada Lee, Dr. W. E. Du Bois, Reid Robinson, Robert Kenny, and many others.

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus quickly arose to full height and declared **'I know what the Ku Klux Klan claims. It claims it doesn't believe in violence and stands for Americanism. A man could stand for that."**

Weaver was on his feet in a flash charging Bumpus with defending the KKK.

"If General Bumpus wants to defend the Klan he can," declared Weaver. **'Today they are taking steps in Georgia and New York to dissolve this un-American organization."**

WEAVER

Myrick then testified he believed in **"second class citizenship"** for Negros. **"They should stay in their place,"** he said. Thurs. 9-5-46

Attorney Looby told the court Myrick was obviously unfit to sit as a juror in the case despite the court's declaration he was qualified.

"We have several grades of citizenship among the white race," the Judge replied to Looby's assertion that under the Constitution only one type of citizenship prevails.

The veniremen called today were from a new panel of 230 Lawrence County citizens. Under the new speed-up system of examination, with defense rights limited, it is expected the defense will have exhausted its 200 peremptory challenges within a few days. The jury is expected to be hand-picked by the judge.

New Tenn. Trial Site Rejects Shift

Daily Worker New York, N.Y. Thurs. 7-11-46

Special to the Daily Worker

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., July 10.—White professional and business men including Mayor R. O. Downey, began circulation of four petitions today opposing transfer of the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes to this town.

Mayor Downey said the 4,000 residents of Lawrenceburg were prepared to defeat District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus at the polls if he insisted on going ahead with the trial here.

The petitions support charges of attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People that Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram's action in moving the trial to Lawrence County carried the Columbia Negroes "from the frying pan into the fire."

Petitions of the business men state: "It is our considered opinion that this trial (set for Aug. 6) would only succeed in stirring up strife between Negroes and whites."

"It is not our dirty linen," concludes the petition. "We resent being called upon to laundry it."

ASK RECONSIDERATION

Another petition was sent to Judge Ingram by 100 Negro citizens of Lawrence County urging him to reconsider his order sending the trial here.

"We conscientiously believe it would be impossible for the Negroes to receive a fair trial and impartial hearing before a Lawrence County Grand Jury," the petition of the Negroes declared.

The petition added that the signers anticipate racial discord if venue in the Columbia case is changed to Lawrence County.

The Negro petitioners stated three local Negroes who signed state affidavits stating the Columbia defendants could receive a fair trial in Lawrenceburg "did not think of the future of their group or themselves."

One Negro who signed a state affidavit retracted his earlier position and signed the Lawrenceburg petition.

Meanwhile, Z. Alexander Looby and Maurice Weaver, defense attorneys, opened argument in Columbia, 33 miles north of here, to adjourn until fall the case of William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy, called for trial in Maury County Court House next Monday. The two are indicted separately on charges of assault with attempt to commit murder in the first degree.

Pillow and Kennedy, the latter a war veteran, were arrested with the other Columbia defendants after they fought off a white lynch mob Feb. 25. The defense did not seek a change of venue for these two or for John Blackwell, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson and James Stephenson, also indicted following the Columbia disturbances.

The defense sought to move trial of the case of the first 25 defendants called for hearing to Nashville or Franklin. Judge Ingram denied this petition and moved the case, over protests of defense counsel, to Lawrenceburg.

I'm Prejudiced, Admits Juror; Oh, But You're Not, Says Judge

The Afro-American Baltimore, Md. Sat. 9-28-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—As recently as five years ago signs hung in villages of this county admonishing colored persons to "read and run," according to the admission of a prospective juror in the trial of 25 defendants under indictment for complicity in the Columbia riot.

"The 'n—s' were run out of this county years ago," one courtroom spectator drawled in the presence of countless reporters from large Northern dailies and news services covering the trial.

Moreover, behind these open expressions of hostility toward colored, the general atmosphere of the courtroom and courthouse square is heavy with the belligerence of the local gentry, the State prosecutor and judge alike against the defendants and their counsel.

Admitted Bias Not Decried

Indicative of the impossibility of the defendants to get a fair trial here is an exchange between the judge and one of the jurors which went as follows:

JUDGE: Are you disposed to believe the testimony of the defendants?

JUROR: I wouldn't believe anything a "n—" said even if he was under oath.

JUDGE: Now I didn't ask you that. You just answer my questions, that's all.

JUROR: Yes, jedge.

JUDGE: Now, you believe in a fair trial for everybody, don't you—even if they are colored—and you would weigh the evidence in this case and judge them solely on that, wouldn't you?

JUROR: Well, jedge, I already told you where I stand, but I guess I could.

Over the objections of defense counsel who had already used all of their permitted peremptory challenges, this man was qualified by the judge as one of the 13 jurymen selected from a panel of more than 500 persons who were questioned.

Lawrenceburg Protests Trial Of Riot Defendants

Daily World Atlanta, Ga. Sunday 7-14-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. —(ANP)—Mayor R. O. Downey protested last week against the scheduled trial for 25 Negroes, facing charges here on Aug. 6 in connection with the February race riot at Columbia. Lawrenceburg's population of 4,000 is prepared to defeat Prosecutor Bumpus for reelection if he continues with present plans, Downey declared.

Several civic groups and the local of the American Legion also have petitioned against the trial, suggesting that Columbia wash its own "dirty linen." 7-14-46

The trial, resulting from the racial disorders in which two Negroes were killed, was transferred here last week after NAACP counsel had asked a change of venue for the defendants. The lawyers did not want Lawrenceburg, however, because of its reputation for having more deep-rooted racial prejudice even than Columbia.

Lynch Mob Enlistee Kept Off Tenn. Jury

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 29.—Defense attorneys scotched an attempt by the state today to seat on the trial jury of the Columbia Negroes a white man who sought to enlist last February in a Columbia lynch mob.

He is G. L. Pace, ex-soldier from Lawrence County. District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus had accepted Pace, after a brief questioning, as a qualified juryman. Fri 8-30-46

But under questioning by Z. A. Looby, attorney of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, Pace testified he had rushed 33 miles to Columbia on Feb. 26, after a mob threatened to lynch James Stephenson, Negro Navy veterans, and Gladys Stephenson, the veteran's mother.

Pace said he expected to be supplied with firearms in Columbia to put down a "race riot." But most of the Negroes he went to "put down" were in jail when he arrived, he added, and the distrubances resulting in this trial were ended.

When quizzed by the State Attorney, Pace testified he could give the 25 Negroes charged with attempt to commit murder, a fair trial. He expressed eagerness to get on the jury. Bumpus said the venireman qualified as a juror. But the vigilant Looby, seriously criticized by Judge Ingram in the matter of quizzing veniremen on race prejudice brought out the hidden truth of Pace's past by three rapid fire questions. Pace also testified he started trouble with Negroes while he was in the Army.

And he said he was put out of a USO center in a northern city when he protested against a Negro GI dancing with a white girl.

When Pace's true background was inscribed in the court, the state declined to offer any further argument to seat him on the jury. Pace was challenged for cause and removed. Fri 8-30-46

Meanwhile Judge Ingram suspended his ruling of yesterday denying defense attorneys the right to quiz veniremen on race prejudice.

Pull Legal 'Fast One' In Tennessee Riot Case

The Call — Kansas City, Mo. Friday 7-12-46

COLUMBIA, Tenn. —(NNPA)—A legal "fast one" last Tuesday resulted in the transfer from here to Lawrenceburg, Tenn., thirty-four miles to the south, of the proposed trial of twenty-five colored men facing charges as a result of a race riot here last Feb. 25 and 26. 7-12-46

Defense attorneys, who had sought a change of venue, immediately objected to the move to Lawrenceburg as an "out of the frying pan into the fire" affair.

The defendants are charged with assault with intent to commit murder or with being accessories before the fact.

The transfer was ordered by Circuit Judge Joe Ingram in a decision on the defense motion for a change. The defense had charged a fair trial was impossible in Maury county because of racial prejudice. 7-12-46

"The records in this case indicates the defense motion was well taken and should be granted," Judge Ingram said.

Smiles appeared on the faces of defense attorneys, but vanished as the judge proceeded.

"The record consists of affidavits from the defense and from the state," the judge said. "All the defense affidavits are to the effect that a fair trial is impossible in Maury county. The affidavits submitted by the state do not contest this. The state has offered nine affidavits, six from white persons and three from Negroes, all affirming that a fair trial could be obtained in Lewrenceburg, county seat of Lawrence county."

Defense attorneys quickly objected. 7-12-46

"Your honor," said Maurice Weaver of Chattanooga, Tenn., "prejudice against Negroes is far greater in Lawrenceburg even than it is here in Columbia. To move this trial to Lawrenceburg would be to take these Negro defendants from the frying pan into the fire." Call

Judge Ingram said he would be forced to rely solely on the record in making his decision. It is uncontroverted in the record, he said, that Columbia would be an unfair place for the trial and Lawrenceburg a fair place. Kansas City, Mo.

"I move to withdraw our motion for a change of venue," Weaver said. 7-12-46

"Motion denied," replied the judge. "I hereby order this trial to start August 6 in Lewrenceburg."

Defense counsel said they would launch a new legal battle to move the trial from Lawrenceburg. 7-12-46

Two colored men were shot to death in the Maury county jail during the rioting, which raged for two days and resulted in the sending of state police to Columbia. Eleven persons, two of them colored, were wounded during the disturbance.

The defense staff is being financed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

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Civilian (Tennessee--Columbia-- Trial)

Wash Your Own Dirty Linen, Columbia Whites Told

The Afro-American, Baltimore, Md. Sat. 7-20-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn.—Adding to the protests of defense counsel for the Columbia riot victims against the transfer of their trials to Lawrenceburg, white business and professional men of this city last week opposed the shift, declaring in a petition, "It is not our dirty linen. We resent being called upon to launder it."

In addition, another petition was sent by colored residents of the city to Judge Joe Ingram, who ordered the a following a plea for a change of venue by torneys for the 25 defendants.

while, it has been learned, because of the illness of Thurgood Marshall, NAACP chief counsel and leader of the defense, opening of the trials may be postponed beyond Aug. 6, the date originally scheduled.

Fair Trial Impossible

Signed by 100 persons, the petition filed by the colored group read, "We conscientiously believe it would be impossible for them to receive a fair trial and impartial hearing before a Lawrence County grand jury."

Leader of the white group fighting the transfer, Mayor R. O. Downey stated further that the town's 4,000 residents are prepared to defeat District Attorney Paul Bumpus, prosecutor, if he insists on having the trials held here.

The petition filed by the whites charged specifically that "having a trial of this nature here at this time would subject Lawrence County to criticism, regardless of what would happen.

Publicity Unwelcome

"We have no trouble between any of the races; we want none; we are sure that the trial would cause some ill feeling from the so-called 'yellow sheet' propagandists. It would bring Lawrence County publicity of a nature we do not want and have done nothing to deserve." The Afro American

Previously, when the transfer was announced, nine affidavits from Lawrence County citizens, three of them colored men who later signed the document opposing the move, were presented as proof that the trials would be fair.

From Frying Pan Into Fire

However, defense held that because Lawrenceburg is considered even more bigoted than Columbia, it would be like "jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

Among the white citizens opposing the shift were 1419 veterans of the two world wars, all members of an American Legion post, who passed resolutions asking Judge Ingram to "take such action as is necessary to prevent the transfer." Baltimore, Md.

Mrs. Roosevelt's Condemnation

Severe condemnation of the transfer of the trials to Lewrenceburg was made also by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt in her column, "My Day," of July 9. In it she said:

"I was discouraged on receiving word the other day that the trial was to be moved to a place where the tension and anti-colored feeling is, if anything, stronger than it was in Columbia. Sat. 7-20-46

"Throughout this whole case I have been wondering why we could not understand that among the men in this community there were numbers of colored veterans.

"They often felt, during their war service, that there was discrimination against them. And to come home and face the difficulties of readjustment and of finding a job is as difficult for them as for white men."

EX-SHERIFF HEARD IN TENNESSEE TRIAL

The Times, New York, N.Y.

Says Columbia Did Not Violate Negroes' Basic Rights in Getting Statements Signed

Thurs. 9-26-46

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 25—J. J. Underwood, Sheriff of Maury County until Sept. 1, steadfastly denied today that the Constitutional rights of Negro prisoners were violated by officials of Columbia, Tenn., following the disturbances there last winter.

Recalled as a State witness by Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus after having spent all last Thursday on the stand, Mr. Underwood testified that two Negroes heard by the jury yesterday had signed statements for the Attorney General under oath, and that they were not intimidated by officials.

The Negroes, who appeared as State witnesses, denied that they had signed the statements under oath.

Z. Alexander Looby of Nashville, an attorney sent by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, questioned the ex-sheriff about methods employed in obtaining the statements from Negroes seized in a raid on Mink Slide, the Negro business district of Columbia, during the disorders of Feb. 25-26.

His questions failed to elicit from Mr. Underwood an admission that freedom was refused the Negroes under bonds already made, until they had signed statements for the State.

The defense attorneys also attempted to show that the Negroes were held incommunicado for several days.

C. H. Denton, Maury county magistrate, testified under direct examination that all Negroes who signed statements for the attorney general had done so under oath administered by him as a notary public.

George I. Reeves, a Columbia policeman, testified that about one hour before the ambushing he drove into the Negro business district with three other officers, and saw "a large number of armed Negroes," and that James Morton, an undertaker and one of the three principal defendants, "had a double-barrel shotgun in his hand."

Later in the day, T. F. Collins, another Columbia policeman, took the stand and declared that he saw Mead Johnson, another of the principal defendants, armed with a shotgun about an hour before the policemen were shot. Collins testified that Johnson told him:

'Intimidation' Charge Flung At Negro Trial

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 21. (AP)—A charge that state prosecutors were trying to "intimidate" Negro members of legal counsel for 25 Columbia, Tenn., Negroes was hurled today at their trial on charges of firing at Columbia policemen during racial disorders there last February.

Mairice Weaver of Chattanooga, white-member of the three-member defense counsel which includes two Negro lawyers, charged that District Attorney General Paul F. Bumpus was showing "obvious hostility to Negro lawyers and that state attorneys were attempting "to show them they are Negroes and that they don't dare controvert the word of a white man."

Bumpus had complained that Defense Attorney L. A. Ransom had misquoted a witness.

The sharp exchange came late in the day after former Sheriff J. J. Underwood of Columbia had related from the witness stand events of February 25 which erupted into racial strife resulting in the killing of two Negroes and the wounding of a dozen other persons.

Underwood testified that hours before the incident in the Mink Slide Negro business quarter when Columbia's four patrolmen were met with shotgun blasts, a group of about 50 whites had tried to kick in the doors of the jail where a Negro ex-serviceman and his mother were being held. They had been arrested earlier after becoming involved in an argument with a white radio repairman

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Lawrenceburg Not "In Market" For Notorious Cases

Globe + Independent

Nashville, Tenn.

Lawrence County, down on the border of Alabama has been selected as the scene of the continuing trials of some 25 colored Columbians, however neither the people of Lawrenceburg nor the defense attorneys want it held there. How Lawrenceburg got selected as the place for the trials is one of the most unusual legal maneuvers that the people of this area have ever seen invoked in by a prosecution, caught in an embarrassing situation. 7-12-46

It is stated that Lawrenceburg is also a place where Negroes are deprived of the right to sit on juries and it is very unlikely any will be called to the jury that will be selected in these trials. And yet one of the reasons advanced by the NAACP lawyers in their pleas for a change of venue was that they do not put Negroes on juries in Maury County. The prosecution did not make any denial of this when the appeal for a change of venue was made and the presiding judge noted that fact in granting the change. The trials have been set to begin at Lawrenceburg on August 6. If they do it will be over the protests of a large host of both white and colored citizens.

The Lawrenceburg people do not want to get the bad reputation in the nation which Columbia has gotten, both as a result of the February tragedy and the wholesale arrests and manner of conducting the trials. Undoubtedly Judge Ingram is in a dilemma and so is Attorney General Bumpus. They have never encountered such an array of legal talent, nor lawyers prepared to use every shred of law in conducting the defense of their clients as they have met in Attorneys Thurgood Marshall, Z. Alexander Looby, Maurice Weaver and Leon Ransom. The eyes of the nation are on these trials. The opinion is widely held that no such "trumped-up" charges would have been filed against a group of white citizens under circumstances such as prevailed at Columbia when these Negro citizens were arrested. Friday

The suspicion has been that Attorney General Bumpus expected to ride to a high place of political preferment by the way he conducted the trials. But after about three weeks of tangling with the defense attorneys, it appeared certain that Mr. Bumpus would be unable to make any political capital out of the trials. He was almost assured of getting any kind of convictions he appealed for, it was believed. But it was also likely that his convictions would be thrown out by the higher courts. 7-12-46

The leading citizens of Columbia became disgusted with the trials. They became disgusted with the notoriety that had been visited upon Columbia. It is said that the Columbia Chamber of Commerce had made its influence felt in getting rid of the trials. But Columbians had not counted on such opposition as has developed in Lawrenceburg. Mr. Bumpus had not made a proper survey of the lay of the land. Lawrenceburg people think Columbia ought to wash its own "dirty linen" in its own back yard. Globe

Defense attorneys were not consulted by Attorney General Bumpus when he was picking a new place for the trials. The defense preferred either Nashville or Franklin. It is not known whether Franklin people would consent for thhe trials to come there. It is believed, however, that the trials could be held in Nashville, and with more likelihood of the accused men getting a fair trial than in any other city in the state. Nashville Tenn

It can be said in Nashville's favor, for instance, that the courts would not be influenced by the same newspapers that rigged public sentiment in Columbia. Local courts know too much about the newspapers, their publishers and their

er away. Defense attorneys made much of the false reports on the Columbia troubles put out by the newspapers and showed clippings of what they said hurt the defense efforts to get a fair trial.

Friday 7-12-46

The easiest way out of barrassment in which Attorney General Bumpus finds himself would be for him to go before Judge Ingram and acknowledge that the trouble and expense of holding the mass trial are not advisable in view of the fact that any convictions secured would likely be set aside by the higher courts. He could ask the court to dismiss all of the defendants. It is probable the judge would agree to the Attorney General's suggestion and this would bring the whole "messy" affair to an end. 7-12-46

FIFTH RIOT TRIAL JUROR IS PICKED

Birmingham, Ala.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 27—(AP)—Fifth juror in the panel being selected to try 25 Negroes from nearby Columbia for participation in last February's racial disorders was chosen late today.

He is J. R. Bradley, chemical company employe. Age Herald

Earlier in the day Judge Joe M. Ingram overruled a state objection to what Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus called "the defenses' habit of dragging out the case," and then himself asked them to speed up examination of prospective jurors, now in its third week.

Defense counsel was denied a motion for mistrial made on grounds that the state's accusation was an effort "to prejudice the jurors we have chosen against the defense." Aug. 28, 1946

Bond for defendant, Clarence Brown, whose $5,000 bond was declared forfeit and doubled last week when he failed to appear in court on account of illness, was made today, the defense announced.

Judge Okays Talesman Who Says All Columbia Negroes Are Guilty

56a

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 15.—Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram today flatly denied attorneys for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People the right to question prospective jurors in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes on their attitudes toward race discrimination.

Daily Worker, New york new york

He ruled nine times against defense motions to excuse the first prospective juror called for examination. This talesman, Herman Vandiver, a sawmill operator and former county constable, testified that as far as he knew from the local press "all the defendants were guilty."

The judge refused to eliminate Vandiver, stating opinions formed through the press could not disqualify him for service. 8-16-46

Vandiver stated he hired no Negroes in his sawmill despite the fact Negroes were available for such work. He testified he did not believe in the equality of peoples.

Sustaining protests of District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus, Judge Ingram ruled that defense attorneys must not ask prospective jurors the following questions: 1. Would you believe a Negro on oath? 2. Would you give the same weight to testimony by Negroes as to that of whites? Friday

Defense attorneys Z. A. Looby, Maurice Weaver and Dr. L. A. Ransom had to use the first of their 200 peremptory challenges to eliminate the opinionated Vandiver as a juryman.

Ransom charged the court was in grave error in denying the defense the right to ask questions concerning the prospective jurors' social opinions. 8-16-46

"The jury must be a fair and impartial jury," Ransom declared. "We want to know if the man harbors any opinions against any persons because of race or color."

The judge quickly ruled out Ransom's argument. Several times he told defense counsel to "hurry up with the questioning." Attorney Weaver arose and warned the judge: "If biased men sit in a jury box the constitutional rights of the defendants are denied."

All day long the little court house was jammed with prospective jurors. Most of them are farmers in work clothes. There is an overflow crowd of talesmen sitting in small groups under trees on Court House Square.

I heard opinions expressed in and around the court extremely hostile to the Negroes on trial. Summed up—this opinion is that the district attorney will see to it that a "hanging jury" will sit on the case.

The 25 Negroes are charged with attempt to murder Will Wilson, Columbia policeman. Wilson was wounded with buckshot Feb. 25 when the Negroes fought off a white lynch mob with arms.

When the case opened this morning, Dr. Ransom demanded Judge Ingram disqualify himself as trial judge on the basis that he was quoted by the District Attorney as having an opinion hostile to the defense. 8-16-46

Ingram quickly overruled the motion.

As this dispatch is being filed state and defense attorneys are locked in bitter argument over a defense motion to disqualify the second talesman, Andrew Laws, a farmer, who admitted forming an opinion on the case.

Jimcrow on the Bench

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

SHIFTING of the trial site of the 25 indicted Negro defendants of Columbia, Tennessee, to Lawrenceburg, has been aptly termed by their attorneys as "jumping from the frying pan into the fire." Tues. 7-9-46

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., has been characterized by the defendants and their attorneys as the site of even more sinister anti-Negro violence and bigotry than that which occurred against the entire Negro community in Columbia on Feb. 25, resulting in the death of two Negro citizens.

So serious was the concern of the defense attorneys that they moved to withdraw their change of venue plea and take chances of trying the case in Columbia. But the Jimcrow judge and the States Attorney were unmoved.

This case challenges the conscience of America.

We demand that there be no trial of Columbia Negro citizens in Lawrenceburg.

We call on labor, and the people of America to echo this demand through mass rallies, telegrams and protests now.

We demand freedom of the Tennessee defendants now! We demand that President Truman and U.S. Attorney General Tom Clark uphold the constitutional rights of the Columbia. Tennessee, victims.

Jury Summoned in Alabama To Probe Athens Mob Action

The Atlanta, Ga. The Constitution

Tues. 8-13-46

ATHENS, Ala., Aug. 12—(AP)—A special session of the Grand Jury was ordered Monday to investigate Saturday's race riot and Circuit Sol. George C. Johnston said he would press for immediate trial of any indicted by the jury.

"I will not tolerate mob rule in Limestone County," the Solicitor said in a statement. He described the rioting in which an undetermined number of Negroes were beaten or trampled as "a disgrace

to a town that has for more than 150 years had no race disturbance."

Indictments charging riot and rout, carrying a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment in the State Penitentiary, will be asked, Johnston said, on "all those connected with this disgraceful affair . . ."

AGGRESSIVE ACTION

"I will ask the circuit judge to set the cases for immediate hearing and will push them to the limit," he added.

Circuit Judge James H. Crow, Jr., of Decatur, will arrive Tuesday or Wednesday to begin organizing the Grand Jury, which will then be called into special session next Monday.

Meanwhile, nine persons described by County Judge D. L. Rosenau, Jr., as "hoodlum leaders of the mob," were released on bond. Ranging in age from 13 to 41, they were charged with unlawful assembly, and one faced an additional count of carrying a concealed weapon. Bond was fixed at $300 on each count.

Maximum penalty for conviction of unlawful assembly is a $500 fine and six months in jail. Judge Rosenau said he would nol prosse the lesser charges in favor of those carrying heavier penalties in the event the Grand Jury indicts any of the nine. They are scheduled to be arraigned before Rosenau Aug. 26.

50 TO 100 BEATEN

Rosenau estimated that between 50 and 100 Negroes were beaten by mobs of white men he said totaled more than 2,000 at the height of the disturbance. A more conservative estimate was made by State Highway Patrol Director Van Buren Gilbert, who placed the injured at 15 or 20 and the mob as about 500.

The riot was touched off in midafternoon by a fight between a former veteran and his GI brother and a Negro on an Athens street jammed with the usual Saturday afternoon farmer shopping crowd, Rosenau said.

The Judge said Ben Massey, 23, the veteran, and Roy Massey, 19, his brother, an Army private, were taken into custody by police. The Negro, who Ben Massey said struck him with brass knucks, escaped.

A mob estimated at several hundred moved on the combination City Hall-Jail and demanded release of the Massey brothers. The only shot of the disturbance was fired at this time by a city policeman seeking to keep the mob from jamming into the building.

BROTHERS RELEASED

Mayor R. H. Richardson, Jr., said he then ordered the release of the Massey brothers in an effort to get the mob to disperse.

but that someone shouted "Let's clear the streets of Negroes," and gangs of white men began attacking Negroes whenever they appeared on the streets.

The Mayor said the Masseys were released without charge and no charge was filed against them Monday.

Order was restored about nightfall after arrival of 50 armed State Highway Patrolmen. The local State Guard Company was mobilized and other companies in nearby cities were alerted. None, however, was called into service.

In an aftermath, Mayor Richardson said Sunday services at practically all Negro churches in Athens were canceled by their pastors to avoid what they said might be "further incidents."

56a 1946

Civilian(Tennessee--Columbia--Trial)

A NATIONAL SCANDAL

The Chronicle Detroit Mich. Sat. 9-7-46.

Twenty-five Negroes who stand accused of participation in the Columbia, Tennessee, riot are supposed to be tried on these charges in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. Something has gone wrong in the trial. For three weeks the court has been trying to form a jury and 244 persons out of a 312-man panel have been questioned, but only 5 have qualified for jury service in this case. All of the 244 persons questioned except 5 frankly admit that they are prejudiced, that they would not believe a Negro's word over that of a white man, that they believe all the Negroes guilty anyway.

The whole trial is open to serious question by students of the area. The Negro defendants in the trial cannot stay overnight in Lawrenceburg and are forced to commute daily from Columbia, Tennessee. One of them fell ill last week and the court refused to consider affidavits from three doctors explaining the defendant's absence and the sick Negro was jailed again. It takes hard cash for bail and cash only.

Frankly, we cannot understand how the lantern-jawed, human blood-hounds who beat up Negroes and terrorize them for sport can go scot free in this riot and 25 Negroes must stand trial for defending themselves. The whole thing seems to be a damnable farce which is enough to make the angels weep.

Columbia Defense To Ask Another Change of Venue

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Fri. 7-12-46

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 11.—Defense attorneys in the case of the Columbia Negroes declared today they are preparing motions for change of venue to move the trial of 25 of the defendants from Lawrenceburg, where it is scheduled to begin Aug. 6.

The announcement came amid mounting indignant protests of the Lawrenceburg citizenry against trying the Negroes there.

Simultaneously, Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram continued the case of William Pillow and Lloyd Kennedy, Negroes charged under separate indictment with attempt to commit murder, until the November term of Maury County Court in Columbia.

The defense argued and won delay of trial of the Pillow-Kennedy case on grounds of serious illness of Thurgood Marshall of New York, chief counsel of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People and one of four defense attorneys.

OTHER DEFENSE LAWYERS

Other defense lawyers are Z. Alexander Looby, of Nashville; Maurice M. Weaver, of Chattanooga, and Dr. L. A. Ransom, of Washington, D. C.

Both white and Negro citizens committees have been formed in Lawrenceburg, Lawrence County, 33 miles south of here, demanding the trial of the 25 not be held there.

Mayor R. O. Downey, of Lawrenceburg, stormed:

"I know the sentiment of the people here is predominantly opposed to transfer of the trial to Lawrenceburg. We are not for the Negroes. But we don't want to wash the dirty clothes of Maury County."

The case was moved from Columbia, in Maury County, to Lawrenceburg, county seat of Lawrence County, by Judge Ingram July on motion of District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus. NAACP attorneys had protested this action, demanding the trial be held in Nashville, in Davidson County, or Franklin. 25 miles north of here in Williamson County.

TORIES FIGHT THEMSELVES

This new development in the Columbia case, outgrowth of the Negro community's armed resistance to a white lynch mob of Feb. 25, has the political pot boiling over. Old political alignments in the white supremacy camp are cracking. White political leaders are falling out, repudiating old friendships and hurling violent charges at one another.

Amid all this, Central Tennessee Negro communities are uniting as one in support of the Columbia defendants, pledging all-out war against Jimcrow.

Mayor Downey assailed his old friend District Attorney Bumpus, asserting the purpose of change of venue in a lawsuit is to aid the defendants. Downey declared this purpose had been betrayed by the Maury County court action sending the case to Lawrence County.

Downey accused Bumpus of "fixing" the court record to transfer the case.

"We supported Paul Bumpus when he ran before," declared Downey, "but we are going to beat him if he brings the trial down here. We are going to have justice if we have to beat Paul Bumpus to get it."

NAACP attorneys said they planned to take extensive affidavits in Lawrence and adjoining counties to support their new change of venue plea. Looby said he would offer change of venue motions in Lawrence County Court Aug. 3, three days before the case of the 25 Negroes is called for hearing.

Judge Ingram published a notice that a special term of court will begin on that date.

Fri. 7-12-46

Negroes Told To Disband, Sheriff Says

Nashville, Tenn., Banner
Sept. [illegible]

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 21—A mob of Negroes, about half of whom were armed, refused to heed his order to disband and put away their weapons about an hour before four policemen were shot from ambush during the Columbia disorders last February, J. J. Underwood, former sheriff of Maury County, testified in Circuit Court here this morning.

Called as the state's sixth witness in the trial of 25 Maury County Negroes accused of the shooting, the 59-year-old Underwood completed his term of office on September 1. He had previously served a four-year term as deputy sheriff.

During one hour of direct examination by Dist. Atty. Gen. Paul F. Bumpus, the witness gave details of two visits he made to Mink Slide, the Negro business district of Columbia, on the afternoon and night of Monday, February 25.

The first was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when he went there to see James Morton, Sol Blair and Julius Blair, listed as among the defendants in this case, on the matter of arranging bonds for a Negro woman and her son, the ex-sheriff said. The Negro woman and boy had been arrested and lodged in the County Jail earlier in the day for alleged participation in an altercation with a white radio repairman, the incident which led up to the disturbances from which this case resulted.

Although he saw no armed Negroes at that time, Underwood said he returned "sometime after dark" with a deputy sheriff and found the street "filled with Negroes milling around and talking and acting like they were mad."

Underwood told how he had the car stopped, got out and walked among the groups of Negroes. "There must have been between 100 and 150, and about 50 or 75 of them were armed with shotguns and rifles," his testimony continued.

"I insisted that they disband, get off the streets and put away their guns," Underwood continued. "I told them there was going to be no trouble from a white mob."

Although he could not identify the speaker the ex-sheriff testifield he heard someone in the crowd remark, "we're ready and prepared for them."

Mob Refused to Disperse

Underwood said that after the Negroes refused to disband he returned to the jail and telephoned Morton, Negro undertaker, and asked him to try to get the mob dispersed.

"I was not satisfied after making this call," the former sheriff declared, "so I immediately telephoned Gov. Jim McCord and asked that he dispatch state highway patrolmen to us."

It was immediately after this last telephone call, he said, that he heard a small burst of gunfire from the direction of Mink Slide, and a few minutes later a heavy volley. He immediately left for Mink Slide and testified that he was forcibly detained from entering Mink Slide by a group of white men, after he learned that the four policemen had been shot.

Underwood was preceded to the stand by Columbia's chief of police J. W. Griffin, one of the ambush, who testified yesterday afternoon.

The police chief told the court that he and the three other officers were fired upon after he had announced that they were police officers.

AMBUSH CHARGED IN RACE RIOT TRIAL

The Times
New York, N.Y.

2 Policemen Tell of Shooting in Tennessee After Assuring Negroes 'Mob' Was Rumor

Sat. 9-21-46

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 20—Two policemen testified in Circuit Court here today they were shot from ambush and wounded one hour after they had assured the Negroes of Columbia, Tenn., that reports of impending mob violence were mere rumors during the disturbances there last February.

The assertions came during the second day of the trial of twenty-five Columbia Negroes who are charged with being accessories before the fact and attempted murder in the first degree as the result of the incident which followed an altercation between a Negro mother and son and a white radio repairman.

The two officers also declared that previous to the time they were shot two of the defendants, Julius Blair and his son, Sol Blair, civic and business leaders among the Maury County Negroes, told them "to keep the white people out of Mink Slide, because we're ready for them."

Mink Slide is the common name for the Negro business section in Columbia down which four police officers were walking when they were fired upon and wounded about 9:45 o'clock on the night of Feb. 25.

Bernard O. Stofel, 27-year-old veteran of World War II, was today's first witness, and the third witness called by the State after introduction of proof began Thursday morning.

He told the court of a visit he and three other officers made to Mink Slide about 8:45 o'clock in the night and finding the street "crowded with Negroes."

"We stopped the patrol car about midway down the street where the largest group of Negroes were milling around," Stofel stated. "We could see that about 50 to 75 were armed with shotguns and rifles.

Samuel Richardson and Chief of Police J. W. Griffin followed Stofel to the witness stand after the noon recess and testified in practically the same vein.

The defense has conducted minute cross examination in its effort to establish their contention that the shots were fired in self-defense after they had found themselves in a perilous position through threats of mob violence.

Racial Disorder Witnesses Say Warning Given by Negro

Times-Dispatch
Richmond, Va

LAWRENCEBURG, TENN., Sept. 28—(AP)—Four witnesses testified today that James Morton, one of 25 Negro defendants in the Columbia racial disorders case, interrupted a school meeting the night of February 25 and admonished the audience to go home because, he said, there would be trouble in the Negro-populated Mink Slide area.

The witnesses said also that Julius Blair, another defendant, attended the meeting at which plans were discussed for raising money for a new high school. Morton, Blair and the other 23 are being tried in Lawrence County Circuit Court here on charges of attempted murder and accessory.

"All of you had better go home—there is going to be trouble on the streets," G. A. Newbern, Maury County assistant agricultural agent, quoted Morton, an undertaker, as saying when Morton interrupted the school meeting around 8.45 P. M. Sun. 9-29-46

This was about an hour before four Columbia policemen were wounded in Mink Slide after a day of rising tension sparked by a clash between a white radio repairman and two Negroes.

Newbern and the other witnesses — High School Principal Samuel E. Jones, School Supervisor Johnie Belle Fulton and Real Estate Dealer Andrew Jackson Underwood — said the meeting broke up immediately and that they presumed everyone went home.

Additional testimony was presented today by witnesses who said that others among the defendants were not in the vicinity of the place where the shooting occurred.

Klansman Picked On Tennessee Jury

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Mon. 9-9-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 8.—L. G. Hammet, a Lawrence County farmer who attended Ku Klux Klan meetings, was declared qualified for jury service yesterday by Judge Joseph M. Ingram in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes.

The judge ruled the veniremen fit for jury service after the latter said he not only believed in the principles of the KKK, but advocated "taking out persons and whipping them when they get out of their place."

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus stated Hammet was qualified for jury service. Bumpus added the venireman's sympathy with the KKK "would certainly not affect the defendants."

"There's nothing about the Ku Klux Klan in this law suit," Bumpus declared.

The Judge ruled the District Attorney was right. Defense Counsel Maurice Weaver was forced to remove Hammet with peremptory challenge.

As this is being written, the District Attorney is arguing in court in an effort to qualify another venireman, who testified he had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

The former Klan member is R. L. White, a farmer. The District Attorney told the court the law of Tennessee does not apply to the KKK but to a similar organization called the "White Caps."

Meanwhile, J. J. Carpenter, a farmer, entered the jury box, the eighth juror chosen in nearly four weeks of examination of veniremen.

Ed. Smith, another venireman, was ordered by Judge Ingram to serve ten days in jail and pay a $50 fine when the latter balked at answering the court's questions. Smith was the fifth prospective juror jailed by the court since jury examination began on Aug. 13.

Court Bans Queries on KKK Tieup in Columbia Trial

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Wed. 9-11-46

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 10.—The last remaining legal defense guard against a prejudiced jury, the right of counsel to question prospective jurors on membership in and sympathy with the Ku Klux Klan was snatched away today by Judge Joe M. Ingram in the trial of the 25 Columbia Negroes.

Barred from quizzing veniremen on matters of race prejudice and law, attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People are now so limited by the court in examination that the forthcoming jury could easily be composed in part at least of active KKK members.

Examination of veniremen, entering its fifth week, moved along at high speed with Judge Ingram asking the questions, District Attorney Paul Bumpus assisting at times, and defense lawyers overruled on questions carrying more significance than the veniremen's opinions about the weather.

Nine white men whose innermost opinions are little known to attorneys defending the Negroes charged with intent to commit murder are in the jury box with defense peremptory challenges dwindling rapidly. It is expected a jury will be formed Thursday.

Two jury panels totaling 542 Lawrence County property owners have been exhausted. Today began the calling of the third panel of 169.

Judge Ingram is qualifying the veniremen of the new panel in rapid fire pace. Defense attorneys Z. A. Looby, Maurice Weaver and Dr. Leon A. Ransom are filling the record with stinging legal objections to the court's unprecedented and high-handed rulings. Ingram qualified a venireman this morning who stated he would be prejudiced against the defendants because state police were involved in the Columbia disturbances Feb. 25.

Bumpus demanded that the venireman's remarks be stricken from the record and objected to the defense asking any questions designed to bring out such prejudice. Ingram upheld the District Attorney. The Judge barred any questioning about the KKK following a hectic day in which the defense brought out that four veniremen were Klan sympathizers. He had qualified these men for jury service.

Ingram stated the Klan matter was settled when he asked three short questions of the veniremen in a group. He asked, "Did any of you men ever belong to the Ku Klux Klan?" "Do you believe in law and order?" "Do you believe in taking the law in your own hands?"

When the veniremen denied KKK membership and stated they believed in law and order the Judge declared that point out of the way.

Dr. Ransom objected vigorously to the court's failure to go deeper into the question of the Klan program. He likewise objected to the court failing to probe admitted race prejudice of prospective jurors and the arbitrary muzzling of the defense.

Tongue Lashing Given To Vincent Sheean At Trial In Tennessee

The News Birmingham, Ala.

Fri. 10-4-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Oct. 4 —(AP)—Author-Correspondent Vincent Sheean has been the second man to incur the verbal wrath of Tennessee Safety Commissioner Lynn Bomar at the trial here of 25 Negroes accused of racial disorders in Columbia, Tenn., last February.

The first was defense attorney, Maurice Weaver, of Chattanooga. The case was headed for the jury today.

During a 15-minute recess in the trial yesterday, Sheean, who is covering the trial for The New York Herald-Tribune Syndicate, was called to the prosecution table, at which Bomar was sitting, and questioned about an article he had written.

"Why didn't you put the truth in there?" the commissioner asked Sheean, who replied, "I didn't come here to argue with you," and turned to walk away.

Bomar then in a rising voice, called the author "a Communistic . . . and a yellow . . ."

To which Sheean replied: "Thank you very much. I wouldn't want you to say anything differently. A good word from you would be the worst compliment any man could have."

NEGROES WIN VENUE FIGHT

Times New York, N.Y. Wed. 7-3-46

Trial of 25 Will Be Shifted From Columbia, Tenn.

COLUMBIA, Tenn., July 2 (AP)—Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram granted today a motion by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for a change of venue in the trial of twenty-five Negroes indicted in connection with the February racial disorders here. Wed. 7-3-46

The defendants are charged variously with assault with intent to commit murder and with being accessories before the fact. Two weeks ago the association lost a three-week court battle to have the indictments set aside on grounds that they were returned by a prejudiced all-white grand jury.

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10 Jurors in Tenn. Trial

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Sept. 13.—There were still two empty chairs in the jury box this afternoon as rapid examination of veniremen in the trial of the Columbia Negroes wiped out a third jury panel. A total of 711 veniremen have passed through the court since Aug. 13. Completion of the jury, expected momentarily, was held up by a motion of the District Attorney that the 10 jurors now in the box be given a physical examination.

The defense had only 33 of its 200 peremptory challenges left as court was recessed. Sat. 9-14-46

Five out of the first seven veniremen examined this morning were excused by defense peremptory challenges. Two of the five, Joe Daniels and Melvin Sutton, are admitted members of the Ku Klux Klan. Judge Joe M. Ingram qualified them for jury service.

E. L. Thompson, real estate and auto trader, told the court he suspected one or more of the 25 Negroes on trial had trouble with his family 11 years ago. For that reason, Thompson declared, he was prejudiced against the defendants. Judge Ingram ruled Thompson was qualified. The defense removed him peremptorily.

Also qualified but eliminated by the defense peremptory challenges were Aaron Jerrit, livestock dealer, and Luther Thigpen, bricklayer. Both admitted prejudice against Negroes.

"You would try this case on the law and evidence alone," the judge asked, "and give these defendants a fair trial?"

"I don't like the race," replied Jerritt. "I'd give them what I thought was justice."

"He's qualified," the court announced.

Thigpen was excused by the defense when he spoke approvingly on the Jimcrow practice of his local of the brick layers' union.

Jury Selection Hits Snag In Riot Trial

The News Birmingham, Ala. Wed. 8-21-46

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn., Aug. 21—(AP)—Selection of jurors to try 25 Negro defendants on charges growing out of neighboring Columbia's February racial disorders entered the ninth day today, but so far only one juror was in the box.

The court examined 25 veniremen yesterday, the daily quota set Monday by Judge Joe M. Ingram in an attempt to speed up proceedings but failed to choose a single one.

Today's first witness was scheduled to be a Negro bus driver. Two prospective Negro jurors were examined yesterday, but both were excused—one by the court for reasons of health and the other on peremptory challenge by the state.

At the present rate of examination, the panel of 312 veniremen will be exhausted Sept. 2.

Motion To Delay Trial Denied By Presiding Judge

Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

Sun. 8-18-46

Also Withhold Trials Separately For Defendants

LAWRENCEBURG, Tenn. —(ANP)— Lawyers for the defense of the 25 Negro citizens indicted in the Columbia, Tenn., race riots last February continued last week to attack racial inequalities before Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram in the tiny Lawrence County courtroom, here.

Z. Alexander Looby, chief defense counsel, sought to "squash" the jury panel Tuesday on charges of irregularities. He charged that the panel was drawn up by "illegal manipulations of the list" and that 'qualified Negroes were barred from the jury box from which the panel was drawn."

Charges by the defense of racial inequalites were made before a change of venue was granted that brought the riot trial here from Columbia. More than 200 Negroes were brought to the witness stand by the defense to prove tha Negroes were denied jury servic as a means of squashing the inten to kill indictments that now han over the heads of 25 Negroes wh drove back a prospective lync mob in Columbia last Februar following an altercation between white radio repairman and young navy veteran and his mother.

15 VENIREMEN

Fifteen Negroes were among the 314 veniremen who appeared in Judge Ingrams' court Tuesday. They were seen as the result of the continued sniping at injustices against Negroes by defense lawyers Looby, Maurice Weaver, white, and Thurgood Marshall, now ill in New York. Dr. L. A. Ransom is substituting for Marshall.

Judge Tells Columbia Defense Jimcrow Expose Must Stop

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Sun. 6-8-46

By Harry Raymond

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 7.—Judge Joe M. Ingram today impatiently declared the trial of the 31 Columbia Negro defendants that questioning about local Jimcrow jury practices has **"got to come to an end some time."**

"We'll know our stopping point," replied Dr. L. A. Ransom, associated defense counsel. Ransom had just concluded questioning the 186th witness, 62-year-old Clarence Bell, a Negro, who testified, as did all who took the stand before him, that no qualified Negroes served on a jury here in 50 years.

Asked when the stopping point would be, Ransom told the court: **"That will be when we have called the last Negro over 21 years old in the county."** 6-8-46

Dr. Ransom, attorney for the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, places on the State's Attorney the burden of cutting short the preliminary defense plea to quash the mass indictment of the Negroes on **"attempt to murder"** charges. The hearing has been deadlocked for two weeks. Sun.

Ransom told the judge the plea could be quickly ended if the State could stipulate the fact that no Negroes have served on juries here prior to a police mob assault on the Negro community on Feb. 25, out of which the present charges grew.

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus declined to make the stipulation and declared: **"The onlyest thing we can do is to stay as long as they do."**

"Now," said Judge Ingram, **"if we continue for days hearing testimony of persons of color we may then expect the state to call many white people who have not been called for jury duty."** He has carefully avoided using the world "Negro."

Alexander Looby, chief defense counsel, told the court there were 3,000 Negroes in Maury County qualized for jury service. **"We're trying a very important constitutional issue," he said. "Since we cannot call on a qualified person to testify as to the number of qualified Negroes we will have to do it the hard way and call all these witnesses."**

ONLY PAY TAXES

Typical of witnesses called today was Dan Legs, Negro property owner. He said he had never heard of a Negro serving on a jury here. Asked by the Prosecutor if he had been "around the courthouse much," Leggs replied ironically: "Only to pay taxes." New York, N.Y.

The next witness was Joe Worley, 73-year-old Negro. He said he never heard of a Negro on a jury. He was questioned further:

Q. Is your name on the tax rolls in Maury County?

A. It should be. I pay taxes here in the court house.

Q. Are you a member of the Negro race?

A. I'm not a member of the white race. Daily Worker

Trial was recessed until Monday. At that time steps are expected to be taken to break the deadlock and force a decision on the issue of the indictment. Sun, 6-8-46

Two Jurors Selected For Race Hearings

The Advertiser Montgomery, Ala. Aug. 8-20-46

LAWRENCEBURG, TENN. Aug. 19.—(AP)—The first two jurors in the trial of 25 Negroes in the Columbia, Tenn., racial disorders case were selected today but the prospect remained that a panel of 312 veniremen might be exhausted before 12 suitable men are found.

The first juror selected was W. E. Staggs, a farmer, the 26th Lawrence Countian questioned for prospective jury duty.

The other was Floyd Coffey, also a farmer, approved by the defense late this afternoon after an hour and 20 minutes of questioning.

Thurgood Marshall To Appeal Court Verdict

Michigan Chronicle Detroit, Mich.

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—(NNPA)—Circuit Judge Joe M. Ingram last Wednesday overruled a defense motion to quash indictments for attempted murder against twenty-five colored persons accused of participating in rioting here last February 25 and 26.

The motion was based on a defense contention that qualified colored people in Maury county have been systematically excluded from jury service. Arguments and testimony in support of the motion began May 28 with 217 witnesses appearing for the defense and 88 for the state.

Sat 6-29-46

Finds No Bias

Judge Ingram said in his decision that the fact the defense had been able to produce a large number of colored persons who had never been called for jury service was no proof of racial discrimination in the makeup of Maury county juries.

The judge ruled the state had shown that at least 10 colored persons were subpoenaed for possible jury service for the February court term.

Thurgood Marshall, special counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, New York, who is representing the defendants indicated an appeal will be taken from the decision. The evidence has shown, he maintained, that no colored persons ever have served on Maury county juries. 6-29-46

After giving his ruling, Judge Ingram said he was ready to proceed with the trial but Marshall then interposed a motion that the 25 defendants be given separate trials. This motion was denied after four witnesses had been heard.

Marshall followed this up with a motion for a change of venue on the grounds that prejudice against the defendants in Maury county made a fair trial impossible. The judge ordered arguments on this motion to begin Monday after attorneys said at least a week would be required to present evidence.

Attorneys said that if a change of venue is denied the trial may get under way within two weeks.

Tenn. Judge Bars Attack on Jimcrow

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

By Harry Raymond

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 6.—Maury County Judge Joe M. Ingram stomped his judicial foot down hard today on attempts of defense attorneys for 31 indicted Negroes—victims of last February's lynch raid—to question witnesses on the full significance of Dixie Jimcrow.

"We can't get afield here on social customs and practices," the judge declared.

The judge intervened during a fierce clash between state and defense counsel. He stopped Maurice Weaver, white attorney for defense, when the latter quizzed the 154th witness, Sam Porter, a Negro, on how his people were segregated and discriminated against. Fri

Weaver called another witness, Rufus Vestel, 69, deacon of a local Baptist Church, and asked him the questions. Judge Ingram banged his gavel. Weaver addressed the court, his voice resounding angrily in the courtroom. 6-7-46

"I want to show," said Weaver, his broad Southern accent challenging Southern race relations, "I want to show segregation of Negroes is common practice in the community. Although the law permits Negroes to serve on juries, social practice hinders carrying out the law. Daily Worker

"If a Negro was picked for a jury along with white men he would be locked up with them. He would have to sleep with them, eat with them. Thus Negroes are kept off juries in compliance with this socia custom, and everybody knows it." New York N.Y.

Two more Negro witnesses were called. The defense pressed its line of questioning.

"Am I to understand that testimony on social customs is to be inadmissable?" asked chief defense counsel Z. Alexander Looby.

"I've permitted some," said Judge Ingram. 6-7-46

One hundred and seventy witnesses have already testified to the exclusion of Negroes from Maurys County juries. At this moment a total of 388 witnesses have been called by the defense to prove the defendants were illegally indicted for 'attempt to murder' Fri

Judge Ingram continues to circumscribe the defense more and more every day in its effort to show a social system is on trial and not the 31 defendants.

"We are more concerned if a legal right is violated," stated the judge when defense counsel insisted social custom is the basis for legal custom.

Thirty witnesses heard today included railroad workers, post office employees, farmers, teachers, chauffeurs, war veterans, all Negroes None ever heard of a Negro serving on a jury.

Tenn. Defense Spurs Fight for 31 Negroes

Daily Worker New York, N.Y.

Mon. 6-10-46

By Harry Raymond

COLUMBIA, Tenn., June 9.—A three-pronged legal offensive to exonerate 31 Negroes on trial for fighting off a lynching last February with arms, is moving steadily toward a dramatic climax in the hot, stuffy little Maury County Court House.

Attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, defending the Negroes against charges of "attempt to commit murder" have flatly refused to accept trial Judge Joe M. Ingram's suggestion that they call a halt to the two-weeks' parade of witnesses testifying to the Jimcrow exclusion of Negroes from juries.

The defense plans to:

1—Call at least 80 more witnesses tomorrow in continuation of the plea of abatement to outlaw the indictment. One hundred and eighty-six have already been heard. Mon, 6-10-46

2—Demand the trial be moved to another county if the plea of abatement fails.

3—Move for separate trials for all the defendants.

District Attorney Paul F. Bumpus has not yet placed any witnesses on the stand. But he will have a tough time with the mountain of evidence already introduced, condemning the Jimcrow court system.

Most damaging testimony so far came from William Henry McConocoe, courthouse janitor.

McConocoe, a Negro, was asked by the State's Attorney: **"Do you know for a fact that any officer, or any member of the jury commission has failed or refused to place the name of any person in the jury box because of his race or color?"**

"Yes," replied the elderly Negro.

"Who is the party who refused or failed to do this?" asked the State's Attorney angrily.

"I don't know who it was," the Negro replied, "but I know it was done." Daily Worker

McConocoe's testimony backs up the defense charge a conspiracy existed prior to Feb. 25 to bar Negroes from jury service.

Defense attorneys are prepared to introduce evidence showing prejudice against the accused Negroes is so strong in the county that it would be impossible to pick a jury that would give them a fair trial. This evidence will be offered only if Judge Ingram turns down the plea of abatement. 6-10-46

Judge Ingram has already ruled against hearing the cases of the Negroes separately. But Chief Defense Counsel Z. Alexander Looby, the South's leading Negro attorney, and Maurice Weaver, white defense counsel from Chattanooga, announced they would later renew the plea for separate trials.

New York, N.Y.

Armed Mob Described At Race-Riot Trial

The Courier-Journal

Louisville, Ky. Sat. 9-28-46

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 27 (AP)—A 76-year-old political leader, one of 25 Columbia, Tenn., Negroes charged with taking part in a racial outbreak there February 25 testified today he had seen an armed white crowd on the public square before the disturbance.

Julius Blair, charged with being an accessory to the shooting of Patrolman Will Wilsford, said he and other Negro leaders decided February 25 to escort James Stephenson, a Negro, out of town. Stephenson had been jailed and then released on a charge of attacking a white man.

"The last time I went to the square there was a big crowd of white people and I'd say between 25 and 50 guns," he told the jury.

Blair, the first defense witness, said that long befroe Wilsford and three other patrolmen were shot in the Mink Slide Negro section that night, he had told officers, "The Stephenson boy has been taken out of town and there's no use to have trouble."

Blair said he made bond fo James and his mother, Glady Stephenson, who also was charged with the attack that morning, because "I heard a mob was growing and I knew the jail was no safe place for anybody."

Jury Now Complete For Race-Riot Trial

The Courier-Journal

Louisville, Ky.

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 18 (AP)—An alternate juror was selected today to complete the panel for the trial of 25 Negro defendants on charges arising from racial disorders at near-by Columbia, Tenn., last February. The introduction of proof will begin tomorrow. Thurs. 9-19-46

Raymond Dunn, a truck driver, was the 13th juror chosen after almost six weeks of continuous interrogation of prospective jurors. Dunn was seated after defense attorneys, employed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, exhausted their 250 preemptory challenges.

Lawrenceburg, Tenn., Sept. 19.—U.P.): Twenty-five negroes went on trial in circuit court here today for attempted murder of four officers who were wounded during a race disturbance at Columbia, Tenn., last February.

The trial opened quietly before a capacity courtroom audience seven months after the negroes were arrested as an aftermath of a week-end of rioting and shooting.

Z. Alexander Looby, negro lawyer from Nashville, answered "not guilty" each time indictments were read against the defendants by W. A. Harwell, assistant attorney general.

Court attaches expected the trial to drag out for a month, following a pattern set by the defense in seeking almost daily to have the case thrown out of court or held up. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and several other groups were providing funds for the defense.

The jury, most of them farmers, appeared in good spirits as they filed into the jury box for the start of the long delayed trial. As each man was accepted for duty during the six weeks-long process of selecting a panel he had been carted off to the county jail to keep him away from outside discussion of the case. They appeared to be glad that section of the ordeal was over, particularly a 60-year-old farmer, J. A. Stubbs, who had been residing at the jail two days over a month.

First witness called by the state was Charles McKissick, 44, a Columbia farmer and contractor, who brought along a map of the Mink Slide negro business section of that city where the rioting took place.

It was on the night of last February 25 that police battled negroes in the area after a negro woman allegedly pushed a white man through a plate glass window, injuring him superficially and touching off the race tension.

No one was killed during the street fighting, itself, but two days later two negroes were shot to death at the jail when they allegedly tried to overpower police while being questioned.

Columbia Attorney Objects To Procedure

Memphis World

Memphis, Tenn.

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—(NNAP)—The State's attorney charged last Friday that lawyers for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people were attempting to make another "monkey law" case out of the trial of twenty-three of thirty-one colored men involved in the bloody riots here last February.

"We don't want another monkey law case in Tennessee," shouted District Attorney General Paul F Bumpus. 6-7-46 Fri.

He referred to the trial of John T. Scopes 21 years ago at Dayton, Tennessee on a charge of violating State law by teaching the theory of evolution in the public schools

Bumpus' outburst came as the defense questioned Maury County Criminal Judge W. C. Whitthorne, 80, member of the Maury County bar since 1888. Memphis, Tenn.

WEAVER QUESTIONS

Maurice Weaver, white, of Chattanooga, one of four defense lawyers furnished by the NAACP, had drawn from Whitthorne testimony that between 1898 and 1901 grand jurors were selected by the county court comprised of elected justices of the peace and that during that period two colored men had been members of County Court and one had been selected for jury service.

The State's attorney objected on grounds that this was immaterial to the present hearing on a motion to throw out indictments against twenty-three of the thirty-one colored men arrested in connection with the racial disturbance.

6-4-46- Tues.

Twenty witnesses, all colored streamed through the witness box during the day as the NAACP continued its efforts to show that there are qualified colored persons in the county and that these have been barred from jury service through "manipulation of jury lists."

Memphis, Tenn.

About one-half of the eighty-five witnesses the defense plans to call to prove system exclusion of qualified colored persons from jury duty in Maury County because of their race or color had completed their testimony last Friday night.

All except one testified that they had never heard of colored persons being called for jury duty in Maury County. One witness, Sam Carruthers, a school teacher, said he had been summoned once, but was excused at his own request.

Tennessee Race Trial Starts in Lawrenceburg

Tennessee Battle's Second Round

The Worker

By Harry Raymond

COLUMBIA, Tenn.—Embattled Columbia Negroes, who for four drama-packed weeks militantly challenged the whole southern Jimcrow system in a little old-fashioned courtroom here, are girding today for a new phase of their battle. Sun. 6-23-46

Undaunted by Circuit Court Judge Joe M. Ingram's ruling last Wednesday declaring 25 Negroes legally indicted for "attempt to commit murder," the Columbia defense conducted by attorneys of the National Association for Advancement of Colored People will swing into action Monday demanding the trial be moved from prejudiced, KKK-infested Maury County. New York

The application for change of venue is scheduled to be filed with volumes of evidence showing the majority of white residents of the community have been aroused to violent prejudice against the defendants.

Aiding a well-knit Ku Klux Klan, the Federal Grand Jury in Nashville further prejudiced the case against the Negroes by whitewashing the lynch mob and highway patrolmen who attacked their homes and persons last February and shot to death two Negroes.

Passions are high here. KKK elements are becoming bolder. They are lauding the court's refusal to throw out the indictments. Sunday 6-23-46

All groups upholding Dixie second class citizenship for Negroes are crying for a quick trial and imprisonment of 75-year-old Julius Blair, local druggist, and 29 other leading Negro citizens.

Their crime: They got down shotguns on Feb. 25 and stopped a white mob, wounding five policemen, bent on lynching James Stephenson, Navy veteran, and his mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson.

There is not a single Negro in Maury County—and I have polled more than 200 of them—who would not willingly today exchange places with their indicted fellows who sit on the hard courtroom benches reserved for the accused. They're all in the fight.

They came for miles around and stood in the hot courtroom corridors for days awaiting turn to testify and denounce the Jimcrow jury system.

There was bald elderly Jordan Tanner, dignified and carrying a handcarved cane; Granville Nicholson, tenant farmer; Sam Howell, teacher; 66-year-old Peter Bond, a workman; Ernest Campbell, farmer; Eugene Mitchell, janitor; Silar Webb, 68, and Alfred Snipes, 64, farmers. Sun. 6-23-46

These men and some 200 more traveled long miles for the privilege of sitting on the witness stand and speaking out for a brief moment against discrimination and segregation of their people.

Judge Ingram listened to this evidence for days and days, but in the end he ordered the defendants tried, upholding the all-white jury indictments.

Ingram's reply to the parade of challenging witnesses had long been expected.

"Testimony that colored persons have not served on juries does not show discrimination against them," he ruled.

It was the reply the majority of white citizens and officials of the community had been demanding.

But a great process of education is unfolding in Maury County courthouse. And through this trial, which has the prospect of lasting all Summer, a new legal democratic status for Negroes is being established. Sun. 6-23-46

There is not a Negro in Maury County who is pessimistic about the ultimate outcome. I met pessimists in New York a week ago during a short visit there between sessions of the trial. I found insufficient action and organization north of the Mason-Dixon Line in support of the courageous Columbia Negroes who stand today in the very front line of the battle for democracy and freedom for all of us.

They are appealing to you to support them in their fight for justice.

CHICAGO DEFENDER HITS TENN.

Daily Worker

CHICAGO, June 28.—The Chicago Defender, influential Negro weekly, today assailed the Federal Grand Jury whitewash of the anti-Negro violence in Columbia, Tenn., as "a brand of justice which stinks with the rotten odor of an American brand of Nazism." New York, N.Y.

"Not only did the Grand Jury absolve Maury County and state enforcement agents from criminal responsibility, it commended them for 'impartial action' in their treatment of Negroes and whites alike," the Defender said.

"Federal Judge Elmer Davis—a southerner—a reported Ku Kluxer—who ordered the investigation only after United States Attorney General Tom Clark had insisted upon it, even went further than the report, charging that all those who disagreed with the findings were either Communists or agitators who were interested in stirring up trouble between the races." Daily Worker 6-29-46

"Yet irrefutable facts" the Defender continued, "which even the Grand Jury could not gloss over, show that two Negroes were killed **AFTER THEY WERE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.**"

The Chicago paper also lashed the "so-called liberal Southern groups supporting the Grand Jury whitewash." New York, N.Y.

"There is the Southern Regional Council, composed of both whites and Negroes. . . . We do not know any member of the Council who will openly advocate the abolition of legal segregation in the South. . . . The limit of the liberalism of the white members of the council is advocacy of the paving of streets in the Negro section of the town." 6-29-46 Sat.

Terming the Columbia Case as historic as Scottsboro and the Dred Scott Decision, the Defender concluded: "The world is judging the South and America too. It shakes its head and wonders at a great nation which is too impotent to do anything about its race problem. It shudders and shrinks from a culture which sacrifices Christianity, rules of brotherhood—yes, every decent moral principle—to the god of color. 6-29-46 Sat. New York, N.Y.